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A DECKER PUBLICATIONS PERIODICAL

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8

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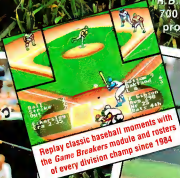
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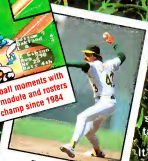
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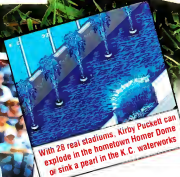
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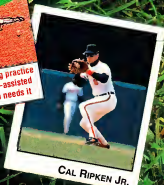
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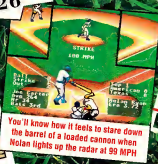
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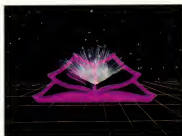


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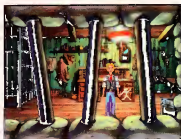
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• Players' Guide to Frenzied Fighting

EG takes a look at the Street Fighter 2 phenomenon, and examines SF2's nearest competitor—the incredible Mortal Kombat Wrestling games are also a part of the rough-and-tumble fighting world, and we've got the whole story on the body-slaming big mens' video game counterparts. 31

• EG Interview

An inside look at the creation of one of the hottest arcade games around. Ed Boon and John Tobias tell us about the invention of Mortal Kombat and the incredible success it has enjoyed. 42

• Freddy Farkas

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• Playing at War

We can all agree that there are enough real wars in the world today. **EG** looks at the origins of computerized warfare simulations, and where they plan to fight in the future. 48

About the art—We at **EG** would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography

Chris Spinks — EG Interview

Mark Whitt — Cover and Players' Guide Cover

We at **EG** strive to keep things interesting. In doing so we would like to get some ideas on what people want out of our magazine. After all, there are a million different ways to make this publication possible. We would also like to know if those of you who read this space (let's call it your "EG" space) would like to take part in some sort of exclusive contest. Maybe the winning date with one of the **EG** editors. No don't go entering this contest yet, as it doesn't exist but how about some letters if you would be interested. Some of us at **EG** are married, but there are still a few of us who are single. Drop us a line and tell us how you feel.

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Screen shots shown are from the Super NES version of the game.

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POWER ON!

A History-Making Announcement

Here at **Electronic Games**, we pride ourselves on our imaginative and innovative thinking. We "invented" the concept of a magazine devoted to video and computer games a dozen years ago, and we've tried to rethink, and reinvent, the form since it started last fall.

Now we've done it again. The magazine that innovated the policy of reviewing only games that actually exist strikes again! I'm happy to take yet another step where no games magazine editor has gone before and admit that I was 100% wrong about something. I heard those gasps all the way out here in Las Vegas.

Yes, I know it is shocking, even unprecedented, for a gaming mag editor to confess that he was incorrect, but I can stand the heat.

And, yes, I know that this will put me one-down versus my infallible colleagues who guide other newsstand titles. They are, after all, never wrong. Don't take my word; just ask them.

But I was wrong, and now I'm going to tell you about the news headline that brought me face to face with this fact. The Software Publishers Association, the trade group for makers of computer software, have voted **Castle Wolfenstein 3D** as 1992's outstanding action game.

It's shareware. A small new group called Id Software developed it, and Apogee markets it to the world.

Like many professional game critics, I have occasionally disparaged shareware and public domain software as incalculably and inescapably inferior to the commercial variety.

I still think this is basically true. Commercial publishers spend 10 times the budget and have many more specialists to work on a game project, and the results generally have an all-around quality and slickness that is difficult for a part-time game inventor to emulate.

In assigning shareware automatic secondary status, I neglected to consider one factor: dedication. Jay Wilbur's crew at Id simply worked longer and harder than anybody could reasonably expect. And although the Id team is small, it contains an unusually broad mix of talents.

Castle Wolfenstein 3D, which is now available in commercial form as **Spear of Destiny** from Canada-based FormGen, is not just good, it is ground-breaking. The game-system embodied in this first-person shooter made the product departments of more than one very famous publisher turn green with envy.

In fact, Id has licensed the system to at least one publisher for a forthcoming product. Meanwhile, the group has concocted an even better interface for **Doom**, which FormGen will release by the end of 1993. **EG** will have a progress report on this one next month.

Castle Wolfenstein 3D won the SPA award, overcoming the industry's strong prejudice against shareware, because it fulfills every requirement for the exceptional game. The World War II castle crawl has a virtually transparent control scheme, excellent sound and graphics, fluid scrolling and animation, a well-conceived scenario, and as much action as anyone could desire. In other words, it was too good for the SPA to ignore, whatever its origins.

They had the courage to cast aside their convictions about shareware, and I have done the same. Most of it is still unevenly developed and spotty in quality, but my mind is wide open to the possibility of the exception.

And in this case, it is an absolute pleasure to have been wrong.

— Arnie Katz

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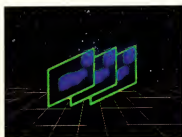
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Here's one date you won't forget!



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FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Clay Dismay

When I opened the March, 1993 issue, I was delighted to see that you had a feature devoted to clay animation in video games. I was further delighted to see beautiful reproductions of Taffy-man and the Impersonator, two characters from **Clayfighter**, one of the games that my company, Danger Productions, is designing and producing animation in conjunction with Visual Concepts and Interplay.

My delight turned to confusion when, several times, **Clayfighter** was mentioned next to the name of Will Vinton Productions. While I have nothing but the highest respect and admiration for their work it should be made clear that all of the animation and character design for **Clayfighter** was created by Danger Productions and not Will Vinton Productions.

My confusion turned to dismay when I looked in the insert box devoted to **Clayfighter** and saw an image that had nothing to do with **Clayfighter**. What a disappointment!

**Ken Pontac, Co-Owner
Danger Productions Inc.
Larkspur, CA**

We apologize for the error, Ken. The two characters from **Clayfighter** that you mention appear outside the box, while the illustration within it is a screen shot from Sierra's **Quest for Glory**.

Belay that Tune

I'm 33 and truly enjoy **EG's** more adult approach to gaming. One suggestion I have to all companies that make electronic games is to please allow gamers to turn off the music and have sound effects only! Bad music can ruin a game; why not offer the option? Let's face it, we all have different taste in music and no one can satisfy everyone.

**Doug Smith
Arlington, VA**

Too true, Doug. Some games do allow such adjustments, as a menu selection or (on PCs) a setup or loading parameter. **EG's** reviewers frequently note this

when the option is available. Alternatively, when it isn't an option, that may be commented on too—and how appropriate or intrusive the music is. If worst comes to worst, in video games and for computer games using sound boards, the volume can be cut, though sound effects will also be lost.

Adventure in Antiquity

In response to The Game Maven's letter (**EG**, Jan. '93) in Game Doctor, I still own an AdventureVision, and all four cartridges for it. The screen resolution appeared to be 150 x 40, red on black. The image was produced by a rapidly spinning mirror and a bar of small LEDs to its right; the pattern on the LEDs was changed as the mirror completed a rotation, producing a picture. I can't remember how many voices the sound chip had, although the sound wasn't bad at the time. The system had one joystick, and two four-button pads on either side for lefties or righties. The machine ate up eight D-cells, at a rate of eight Duracells per two hours. As one might imagine, the machine was expensive to operate without plugging it in. The games all played rather well, with some flicker on **Space Force**, an **Asteroids** clone, when the screen was filled with moving rocks. Unfortunately, the AdventureVision I have now is in parts in the closet with an "Undead" Post-it on it. Someday I will get around to fixing it.

**Jess Sosnoski
Mount Carmel, PA**

Strange how those "somedays" never quite arrive, Jess. But thanks for the additional info on that brief-lived game system.

Evolution?

I love all the unique columns in your magazine covering old game systems and fanzines, and opinions on the new controllers that come out. With columns like Fandom Central and The Jury, the reader participation is tons higher than—heck, all the other mags! That's the

quality I like best about **EG**.

I was born five years after video games were invented, when the 2600 cost \$200. Five years later, I got the 2600 for my birthday after begging for one for half a year. Five years later, I got a NES and threw my Atari to the dust. Four years later, I bought a SNES and threw my NES to the dust. If you haven't found out, whenever I buy a new system, I throw my old one to the dust. Don't for a minute think that I believe having an interest in older systems and games is bad (in fact, all the letters relating to that in the Game Doctor are pretty cool!), it just isn't for me. I seem to be one of those technology heads who can't tell the difference between "newer" and "better"... oh, well.

**"Master J" Lesnick
Houston, TX**

There is an old expression that "newer" is not always "better," but there are a lot of 2600s gathering dust (one way or another) out there.

But Will It Last?

I love the percentage ratings, but it would be nice to have a "Lastability" rating. That way we would know if the game is good for a week, a month or even a year. That would definitely make it easy to choose a game to buy.

**Robert Newland
Sarasota, FL**

The thought is good, Robert, but not really practical. **EG's** reviewers sometimes indicate whether they think a game will last, but putting a number on it is something else again. Some players will go back to a game years after putting it away.

Keep those cards and letters coming folks. A reminder—Please don't enclose survey responses or Jury reviews with letters for this department. They can be delayed past their deadlines. Write to: **Feedback, c/o Electronic Games 330 South Decatur, Suite 152 Las Vegas, NV 89107**

FOR THOSE WHO WOULD GIVE ANYTHING FOR A THIRD EYE.

THE GRAND FINALE OF THE MEANEST 3-D GRAPHIC ADVENTURE SERIES EVER!

If you thought it would be impossible to top the first two "Eye of the Beholder" adventures, you're in for a deadly surprise in *EYE OF THE BEHOLDER III: ASSAULT ON MYTH DRANNOR*. Behold Eye III, with the hottest graphics, a devilishly deep plot, and more cinematics than ever.

This time you're transported to the ruined city of Myth Drannor in the

FORGOTTEN REALMS® world, where you must wrest an artifact of divine power from the dread lich Acwellan. A massive monster bestiary awaits your journey through the forest, mausoleum, temple, and guilds.

The never-ending complexity with more character action, plots and subplots requires you to think on your feet or perish.

The streamlined interface with the new ALL ATTACK button gives you the smoother moves you'll need to survive in combat.

Eye III is an assault on your senses, with three times more cinematic intermissions and five fully-scored music pieces. Plus the ability to import your favorite characters from Eye II, along with weapons, treasure and experience levels.

The way the developers of Eye III see it, if you're going to go out, you might as well go out in style. Who knows, 40-100 hours later, you might just see the light at the end of Eye III. Then again, you might not.



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EG HOTLINE

Compiled by: Joyce Worley

Capcom and Sega Together At Last!

On March 10th, two of the largest video game companies in the world joined hands in an agreement that allows Capcom to develop games for Sega as an official licensee. The first title to be developed is the long-awaited Sega Genesis version of **Street Fighter II**.

At a press conference held in Redwood City, California, Sega and Capcom proudly announced their new

Street Fighter II, was the largest selling Super Nintendo title last year and, according to Sega of America, the second best selling video game title after **Sonic 2**. Capcom will take the Genesis version one step beyond the SNES by offering their **Champion Edition of Street Fighter II**. The title will be released on cartridge and boast 16 Meg of memory, equal to the SNES version.

Street Fighter II - Champion Edition offers several features absent from the SNES version, most notably the ability to compete as one of the four Boss characters — Balrog,

Vega, Sagat, and M. Bison — and the chance to play character against same character without entering a complicated code.

There is no word yet as to whether or not Capcom will offer versions of **Street Fighter II - Champion Edition** for either the Game Gear or the Sega CD.

Capcom stated that they have made no plans at this time to release the **Champion Edition** for the Super Nintendo but declined

they will be producing the **"Turbo" Champion Edition** for either the Sega system or the Super Nintendo.

Those concerned that the arcade feel will be lost on the Genesis because of the current three button controller, can rest at ease. While it is

possible to play the game with the standard Genesis controller it plays much better with one of the six button controllers being released by both Sega and Capcom. The controllers

will be available at the same time as the game.

While it is not clear how future Capcom games will be handled, it would seem that Capcom is not yet through milking their most popular game ever. And it is also evident that the **Street Fighter II** phenomenon is far from over.



alliance, and stated that while they are not ready to state which other titles will be brought over, this is just the beginning.



comment as to whether or not

Game Boy Gets Single Pack

There's a new way to buy Nintendo's Game Boy. It now comes with the game unit and batteries and no game cartridge or other peripherals, for \$59.95. The standard package, which includes **Tetris**, headphones and a game

link cable, remains on the market at \$79.95.

Success of similar packaging for the SNES last summer led to this approach, explained Peter Main, Nintendo vice president, of marketing.

"By offering two options in purchasing Game Boy, consumers are not locked into limited choices."

The Blue & The Gray Gets A Face Lift

Impressions upgraded the graphics on its early Summer release, **Edward Grabowski's The Blue & The Gray** for MS-DOS. Originally slated for 256 color VGA, the imagery is now described as "high-res," and inside sources say the

change is remarkable. In the new graphic set, the Civil War recreation will feature smaller units and bigger battlefields, with new routines to speed the action.

Also in development is **Breach III**, expected to be ready before the Holidays. This will link with **Rules of Engagement II** for a really large play experience.

Shaq Signs Game Deal

NBA rookie sensation Shaquille O'Neal signed with Electronic Arts, in a contract that allows EA to develop several games using the 7' 1", 303 lb. Orlando Magic team member.

The company has not released any details about the basketball games starring Shaq, but the first SNES and Genesis titles,



now in development in house with Don (Jordan In Flight, PGA Tour Golf) Traeger as Producer, should be ready by fall.

Space Mountain and Beyond

Disney Software is currently working on a PC adventure that takes the player from Space Mountain in Disneyland, into a universe of characters through an original story written by Sam (Mickey's ABC's, 123's, etc) Palahnik. The folks at Disney won't spill many details

now, since they plan to introduce the game at Summer CES in Chicago, but word is that the point-and-click adventure has a large serving of strategy, and involves trading among the all-original characters.

Inside sources predict that customers will see more adventure and strategy games based on themes from the park, in the next group of products coming from Disney.

Trek Beams Interplay Aboard

Interplay's 8-year mission: to boldly develop a line of Star Trek games for PCs,

Macintosh, CD ROM and cartridge platforms. Following its success with **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary** for the PC, Interplay signed an

exclusive agreement with Paramount to produce more games based on the original *Star Trek* series.

Versions of **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary** for the Amiga, Macintosh and CD-ROM will be released in the 2nd quarter this year. The CD-ROM edition will be enhanced with special effects and voices by some of the original stars, including William Shatner and possibly Leonard Nimoy. Another mission may also be added.

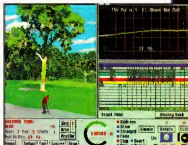
A new PC title, **Star Trek: Judgment Rites**, with eight scenarios, is due in the 3rd quarter.



Software Publishers Name Best Games

The Software Publishers Association, at its annual meeting in March, saluted the top five games for 1992, as chosen by the membership. The winners announced at the group's prestigious awards banquet were:

- **Best Fantasy Role Playing Adventure - Dark Seed** by Cyberdreams
- **Best Simulation - Sim Life** by Maxis



Links 386 was overwhelmingly voted the best sports game of the year.

- **Best Sports Game - Links 386 Pro** by Access
- **Best Action Arcade Game - Wolfenstein 3-D** by Apogee/Id Software
- **Best Strategy Game - A-Train** by Maxis

Nintendo Invites Guest to CD

Virgin Games signed an agreement with Nintendo which gives Nintendo the exclusive videogame multi-

media rights for the ingenious **The 7th Guest**.

There has been no announcement yet as to when Nintendo expects to release the Nintendo CD version of the MS-DOS CD-ROM hit.

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PLAY WITH PROS!

Street Fighter Gets Star Treatment

Street Fighter characters are showing up as action toys from Hasbro, in a comic book series by Malibu, on Thermos lunchboxes, and even on briefs and undershirts from Fruit of the Loom. These are just a



few of the blitz of license agreements announced recently by Capcom.

Besides pinball games by Premier Technology and a video game strategy/tip book from Game Pro Publishing, other domestic

licenses include: plush toys by Ace Novelty; boys' apparel by Allison Manufacturing; stickers, valentines, calendars, gift wrap, bags and decorations by Cleo, Inc.; Halloween costumes, masks and make-up kits by Collegeville; backpacks, gym bags, sleeping bags, tents and soft lunch kits from Ero Industries Inc.; back-to-school supplies by Fasco (USA) Ltd.; hologram hats, stickers and decals by Holographics, Inc.; towels by Jay Franco and Son; key chains, buttons and posters by OSP Publishing; skateboards, roller blades, watches, calculators, wall stickers and key chains by Placo Products Co.; T-shirts by Seabell Sportswear, Inc.; kites, yo-yos, flying discs and nap mats by Spectra Star; home furnishings by Springs, Inc.; trading cards and stickers by Topps Trading Cards; tops and boxer shorts by United Brands, and boys' sleepwear and boxers by The Wormser Co.

DTMC: Grow Up or Climb a Rock

Lester the Unlikely, a "coming of age" adventure, and **Mountain Sports**, fea-



turing outdoor sports with a humorous viewpoint, are SNES cartridges scheduled for fall release by DTMC Inc. Lester is a clumsy and timid adolescent, thrown into an island adventure that helps him develop confidence and personality. In **Mountain Sports**, ten gamers may compete, one player at a time, in kayaking, ATV racing and rock climbing.

Cool Screens For Portables

Nintendo Game Boys look pretty much alike, and so do Sega Game Gear portables. Naki came up with colorful overlay screens to give a new look to hand-helds. Cool Screens come in nine colors and six sports designs, so Junior's won't

look like Missy's—or Pop's! Cool Screens currently have a suggested retail price of \$5.99.



Rebels Delay Assault

The release date for LucasArts' **Rebel Assault** (referred to in an earlier issue of **EG** as **Rebel Alliance**) on IBM-CD-ROM and Sega CD (under the JVC imprint) is postponed to first or second quarter 1994. Described as "screamingly intense," the flying and fighting game

features 15 levels that include combat on Tatooine, Hoth, and finally, on the Death Star.

Graphics use advanced 3D modeling techniques. According to Vince Lee, project leader, "The result is a universe that envelops the player, complete with rocky planet surfaces, sleek ships and asteroids." The game also employs movie sound effects and full-motion video cut scenes.

Amiga, CDTV Cut Prices

Commodore reduced manufacturers suggested retail prices on several of its multimedia computers, including the Amiga 2000 (16% to \$1299), Amiga

3000 series (e.g., the A3000-25/50, 45% to \$1499), and the CD-ROM based CDTV player (40% from \$999 to \$599).

"Affordability is a key factor when computer buying decisions are being made," said Geoffrey Stille, vice president of sales.

Turbo-Touch Goes Multi-System

Spokesmen at Triax say they are working to become "the state-of-the-art peripheral company." The company has started work on controllers for all the new hardware systems, including 3D0, and for the current 16 and proposed 32-Bit systems for Nintendo and Sega, as well as 3-D and

CD systems. There will also be a PC Turbo-Touch 360 this fall, as well as new peripherals for the entire interactive entertainment field.

The new products will appear during the last quarter of 1993. "We want to have state-of-the-art control devices to work on any system. [In some cases] it might just be a matter of plugs, but we'll be using the different technologies."

Carmen Found All Over the Store

Carmen Sandiego licenses are multiplying, including children's sport clothing, backpacks and mouse pads. Some of Broderbund's more recent licensing agreements include a hand-held electronic game to be developed by Tiger Electronics, an electronic children's laptop computer, called the ACME Crimenet Computer, from Integ/Team Concepts Ltd., and a children's puzzle created by The Great American Puzzle Factory.

Cascade Rolls Onto Genesis

Cascade, the dice game included in the **Getaway** computer game collections by Epyx, has been released in Japan as a Genesis cartridge by Telenet. U.S. and European carts for the Genesis are expected to follow.

Cascade is a strategy game in which points are gained by counting straights and four-of-a-kind on a grid. Epyx released the **Getaway** six-game sets in versions for MS-DOS laptops in 1992 and for Windows this year.

Malibu Plans Street Fighter Comic

Chun-Li, Ken, Ryu and other battlers from Capcom's **Street Fighter** gang are the stars in Malibu Comics' new monthly full-color **Street Fighter!** scripted by Len Strazewski and illustrated by Don Hillman and Jeff Whiting.

"The **Street Fighter** comic will be absolutely action-packed, just like the game," said Strazewski. "I'm writing the story to appeal to both comics fans



and game players."

Creative director Tom Mason added, "Hillman's art is very intense, very in-your-face and brings **Street Fighter!** several notches above the average comic."

Another Guest In Virgin's House

Work has already begun at Virgin on a sequel to the hottest CD game of the year, **7th Guest**. There's no information yet about how the new **Guest** will differ from the original.

Also in progress is **Robo-**

Cop vs The Terminator, from a Dark Horse comic book license; an adaptation of **The Jungle Book**; and **Dragon**, based on Bruce Lee's biography.

Virgin is also reported to be quite far along on its initial 3D0 projects, with its software rated right behind Electronic Arts in terms of system mastery.

Hot Circuits On Tour

Hot Circuits, the arcade exhibition featuring a collection of classic and contemporary Coin-ops, is going on the road this year. It can be seen at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia until May 17, and the Children's Museum of Memphis from May 24 through September 22 before returning in October to its permanent residence at the American Museum of the Moving Image, located in Queens, New York.

Roger Sharpe, currently Director of Marketing at Williams Bally/Midway, is credited for assembling the collection. Sharpe says, "The selection criteria was based on factors that

would capture the essence of video gaming over the past 20 years. That includes games that introduced an innovation, games emblematic of significant trends, and machines representing the



epitome of a broad category of games." John Berton, of the Ohio Super Computer Graphics Project, provided text recounting the technical and cultural impact of each game.

The AMMI focuses its exhibits on the technology of moving-image media,

Mallard Revamps Tracon, Moonbase

Tracon II is now **Air Traffic Controller**, and **Moonbase** has been renamed **Lunar Command**, through an agreement between Mallard Software and Wesson International. Both are enhanced versions of the originals

in new packaging. **ATC**, with both windows and DOS versions in the package, now includes sound

board support. **Lunar Command** has added scoring capability, the lack of which, according to Steve Green, Mallard's president and CEO, made **Moonbase** less playable.

"I think **Lunar Command** has all the potential of a **SinCity**. You are building a city on the moon," said Green. "What a fantastic environment and setting for building a self-sufficient city!"



NOW ON GENESIS!

FEEL THE HEAT!

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PLAY THE PROS!

A Talk With Spectrum Holobyte's Patrick S. Feely

In an exclusive **EG** interview, the company's new Chief Executive Officer, Patrick S. Feely, discussed the future of Spectrum Holobyte.

Spectrum Holobyte is already heavily involved with Virtual Reality, three-dimensional and other systems that can do the same, such as 3DO and CD. Pat believes that there will be more than one virtual reality home system marketed in the next 2-3 years; he tantalizingly indicated SH is talking with the companies involved, but declined to give any details.

On the short term, the

SNES **Star Trek** will be released by SH, and the Genesis version will bear Sega's imprint. The games are said to follow the structure of Next Generation episodes and are scheduled for 4th quarter '93. The company also will introduce its **Iron Helix** CD game this summer.

In conclusion, Pat summed up: "This is an



exciting company that hasn't had the opportunity to really show what it can do. The next several years will provide that opportunity... The market is going to move sophisticated hardware, and more sophisticated games are following. What we are trying to do with that sophistication is bring along the entertainment value that will bring to fruition the potential that is there."

the theme. They may also sign up for a complimentary membership in the Kids Go HoJo Fun Club, get a free subscription to Sega Visions magazine, and pose with the life-size cutout of Sonic in the lobby.



Sonic Summers At HoJos

Sonic the Hedgehog leads a parade of Sega stars checking into Howard Johnson's and HoJo Inns this summer in a nationwide "Kids Go HoJo" promotion. Sega will provide guests with Game Gear systems and a library of games to play on them (including **Sonic the Hedgehog 2**), free of charge, during their stay.

In addition, guests' children 3-12 get FunPacks with puzzles, games, booklets and toys tied in with

Top Selling Games February 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbage's and Waldensoftware.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Kings Quest VI*, Sierra
2. *Front Page Sports Football*, Sierra
3. *Comanche: Maximum Overkill*, Nova Logic
4. *Wing Commander*, Origin
5. *Sim City*, Maxis
6. *F-15 Strike Eagle III*, MicroProse

7. *Monopoly*, Virgin
8. *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, Microsoft
9. *Aces of the Pacific*, Sierra
10. *Links 366 Pro*, Access

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *Battle Chess*, Interplay
2. *Wing Commander/Secret Mission 1&2*, Origin
3. *Cinemania*, Microsoft
4. *CD Game Pack*, Software Toolworks
5. *Sherlock Holmes Detective*, Icom
6. *Where in the World is Carmen...*, Broderbund
7. *S. Holmes II*, Icom
8. *Kings Quest V*, Sierra
9. *World View*, Britannica
10. *Wing Commander & Ultima VI*, Origin

Top Coin-Ops of March 1993

Figures courtesy of RePlay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
2. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
3. *Streetfighter II:C.E.*, Capcom
4. *Terminator 2*, Midway
5. *Golden Axe II*, Sega
6. *Super High Impact*, Midway
7. *Sunset Riders*, Konami
8. *Turbo Out Run*, Sega
9. *Steel Gunner*, Namco
10. *Double Axe*, Taito

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
2. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
3. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
4. *Race Drivin'*, Atari
5. *Final Lap 2*, Namco
6. *X-Men*, Konami
7. *Grand Prix Star*, Jaleco
8. *Four Trax*, Atari
9. *Steel Talons*, Atari

10. *Moto Frenzy*, Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II:C.E.*, Turbo, Capcom
2. *Time Killers*, Strata
3. *Fatal Fury 2*, SNK
4. *World Heroes*, SNK
5. *Warriors of Fate*, Capcom
6. *Art of Fighting*, SNK
7. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
8. *Neck N' Neck*, Sunda
9. *Irem Skins*, Irem
10. *Aero Fighters*, McO'River

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Addams Family*, Midway
2. *Creature/Black Lagoon*, Midway
3. *Star Wars*, Data East
4. *White Water*, Williams
5. *Fish Tales*, Williams
6. *Terminator 2*, Williams
7. *Cue Ball Wizard*, Gottlieb/Premier
8. *Lethal Weapon 3*, Data East
9. *Getaway*, Williams
10. *Hook*, Data East

EA Laces on Reebok

Electronic Arts has signed an international agreement with Reebok,

Int. Under the terms of the contract, Reebok logos will appear in some of EA's future sports games.

The two companies also plan some co-promotions.

Dark Sun Shines on SNES

Strategic Simulations will release a SNES version of **Dark Sun: Shattered Lands** late this year. The adventure, originally designed for PC, takes the player and party through a desert world, to form a rebel force and destroy the sorcerer-king and



his army. It's just the first of a projected three-game series.

Dark Sun was released for IBM this Spring, and versions are also scheduled for CD-ROM in September.

EG Reader's Popularity Poll

April 1993

Here's what EG readers like best, according to the Reader's Poll. Duplicate numbers indicate ties.

Favorite Video Games:

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *Sonic 2*, Sega
3. *John Madden Football '93*, EA
3. *Out of This World*, Interplay

Favorite Computer Games:

1. *Wing Commander*, Origin
1. *Falcon 3.0*, Spec. Holo.
2. *Might & Magic*, New Worlds
3. *Crusaders of the Dark Savant*, Sir-Tech

Favorite Multi-Media:

1. *Cobra Command*, Sega
1. *Night Trap*, Sega
2. *Sherlock Holmes*, Icom
3. *Dragon Slayer*, TTI

Favorite Coin-Op:

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *X-Men*, Konami
3. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams

Flashback:

The Birth of Portable Gaming

Long before there was a Gameboy, Game Gear or Lynx, the idea belonged to Mike Katz, then in charge of new product categories in Mattel's toy division. (At that time, there was no Mattel Electronics.) Mike came up with the concept, then asked the design group at Mattel to develop prototypes of an electronic game the size of a portable calculator. Design and engineering was done by Richard Chiang, Design Director; George Klose, Engineer and Model-Maker; and Dave James, Industrial Designer.

The first game was **Auto Race**, using the basic concept of obstacle avoidance. The car started at the bottom of the screen, then moved up, avoiding all the

attacking LED's (light emitting diodes). Mattel showed the prototype in the winter of 1976-77, then formed their Electronics Division to ship the first product for Christmas 1977.

According to Mike, retailers' reactions ranged from "This is a technological breakthrough," to "It's interesting but it's risky".

Within six months Mattel had 6-7 games. Soon after, Entex introduced their line (notable for its inclusion of **Space Invaders**), and Coleco introduced **Mr. Quarterback** in direct competition with Mattel's **Football One**.

All of the initial portable games were dedicated units; non-programmable. Later, Milton Bradley made **Microvision**, which was probably the world's first programmable handheld.

EG salutes Mike Katz for his visionary concept and for pioneering this field of home gaming.

U.S. Draws In Online Chess

Kids matched wits and skill in a chess match between teams from Bradford Elementary School in Jefferson County, Colorado, and Dr. Emanuel Lasker Schule in Ströbeck, Germany. The teams were evenly matched, tying 4 to 4. "It's the first time that I know of that a team of children has played a computer tournament with a team on another continent," said Don Maddox, former editor of *Chess Life*.

Heralded as the world's first live, transcontinental scholastic chess tournament, the match was facilitated by Masque Publishing's **ChessNet Club Edition 2.0** for Windows. The cost of the international match came to only about \$1.50 per game.

James Wisler, president of Masque, said the software will be used for a nationwide league to be formed this spring.



NOW ON GENESIS!

IT'S A KO!

SEGA GENESIS

SEGA

FLYING EDGE

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PLAY WITH THE PROS!

A LOOK TO THE EAST

by Marc Camron

Technology

The rate in which technology moves forward has been increasing dramatically through this century. The state-of-the-art video game machines of the mid to late 1970s didn't really become obsolete until 1982 or '83. This is compared to the computer selling season of the fall of 1992 where the big rage was the great low prices on 386 computers. Now, only six months later, 386 computers are becoming more difficult to find and 486 computers, at the same low price, have taken their place. In the United States, people have begun to resent the rapidly changing technology. Consumers are more often demanding machines that are upgradeable, rather than having to sell off an old game machine or computer every six months when the latest in gadgets becomes available.

Because of this, manufacturers have responded, at least a little bit. On the video game side, Nintendo has shown its reluctance to rush the market ahead with any new advances. They are happy to sit back and loose some market share while letting the competition tread into the rough waters of public scrutiny. It worked for the Super Nintendo and history could repeat itself with the 32-Bit Super NES CD-ROM Drive.

In 1993, several new machines will make their way into the U.S. market. The much awaited **3DO** will debut in the fall, and Pioneer will release their multi-system **LaserActive**. All in all, a pretty boring year as far as hardware is concerned.

In Japan the story is different. While the public is starting to cool a little at the idea of a billion different platforms, all taking their own software, there is still a considerable demand for the latest in toys and gadgets. Many new machines have been announced for release this year in Japan, and there are always a few unexpected surprises that could pop up at any time.

In Japan, several systems are being anxiously awaited.

NEC is releasing a new version of their **PC Engine Duo**. Known as the **Duo R**, it is unclear what changes have been made to the system, other than cosmetic. Rumor has it that some



of the features have been scaled down, and the circuitry condensed to save money. Still some say it is

just an upgrade like a late model car, a must for those who can afford the luxury of upgrading for few reasons.

Sega is preparing the **Mega Drive 2** and **Mega CD 2** in Japan for release later this year. It has been assured that the only changes made to these systems will be cosmetic and that owners of the old systems will not have any problems playing games on the newer systems.

There is a new machine from the FM-TOWNS folks, called the **FM-TOWNS MARTY**. **MARTY** bears a much closer resemblance to a conventional game machine than its big brother the **FM-TOWNS** which looks more like a computer system.

Boasting power said to be comparable to a 386SX computer, the **MARTY** is a powerhouse among console machines. The software is CD based, and there should be compatibility with the existing **FM TOWNS** software though this is not confirmed.

One very strange conglomeration of a system, is the **LaserActive** from Pioneer. **LaserActive** is actually a LaserDisc player with an expansion port. In addition to being able to play all sizes of laserdiscs and audio CDs, consumers will be able to buy expansion modules that allow them to play **Mega Drive** carts

and CDs, PC Engine Hu Cards and CDs, and even an expansion port to handle Karaoke discs. In addition to all of the regular games that the system plays, both NEC and Sega are developing games on laserdisc to take advantage of the unique nature of this system. This would be the first time that such classic games as **Dragon's Lair** and **Mad Dog McCree** could be played at home with the same quality as the versions in the arcades.

While the unit is pricey (coming in around \$700.00 for the main unit, and about \$400.00 for each of the expansion modules) there will most likely be demand from the hard-core game fans as well as those who wish to consolidate their systems. The price will most likely drop considerably within a couple of months after the units release.

3DO is also starting to capture some attention in the Far East. Although this product is considerably American in nature, there is some Japanese money behind it, coming from the Matsushita corporation which produces Panasonic consumer electronic equipment, among others. The **3DO** system has some incredibly powerful processing hardware which allows the machine to perform graphic functions that would be difficult even on the most powerful PC. This combined with the open platform being offered, much like the VCR, **3DO** is poised to make a big splash if enough

Grade A software titles follow its release. At this time there are some 80



companies licensed to produce software for the system, and new ones are coming on-board every day.

And in 1994, it is expected that **3DO** will begin to offer services over cable (or

He doesn't care if you
use the plasma
flame or the
chainsaw arm
to carve his
**LOBSTER
CYBORG
BUTT,**

just please be gentle.





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CYBORG JUSTICE



Enough legs, torsos, and weapons that you can make 216 different Cyborg dispensers of correctional rehabilitation. (That means pain.)



Arcade mode. Where two players team up to teach an army of Cyborgs a little respect. This is best done by ripping off their arms.



If they still don't get it, teach their enemy, then plant a spiked foot or two in a place that spiked feet shouldn't ever be.



Two players, head to head, can fry, saw, and beat each other to death over and over again. You shouldn't try this without the game.



SEGA
GENESIS



INSERT COIN HERE

Full Tilt Boogie

by Jay Carter

From February 12th to the 14th, at the Park Central Hotel in midtown Manhattan, over 400 of the best players in the world braved the elements during New York City's third worst snowstorm of the year in the hope of claiming the title of the Greatest Pinball Player.

The event was the third annual Professional and Amateur Pinball Association (PAPA 3) International Championships, and, over a Valentine's Day weekend of non-stop marathon pinball playing endurance, 26-year-old Lyman Sheats Jr. of Hampton, Virginia walked away with the title and a check for \$3,000.

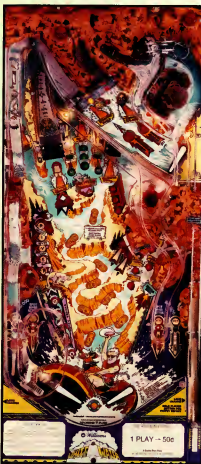
The spectacle, complete with a special funding raising benefit in support of the Special Olympics, also included such luminaries as Brooke Shields, Lou Reed and the cast of the new Broadway musical *Tommy*, was enough to reaffirm the fact that pinball has hit the big time not just as a competitive endeavor, but also as a coin-operated amusement game category where the excitement only seems to be increasing.

Even if you're totally dedicated to video games, it's difficult, if not impossible, to ignore the tremendous strides pinball is making with the aggressive introduction of new models (which we'll be looking at this time around). Then there are upcoming games that will embrace such themes as *The Twilight Zone*, *Jurassic Park*, *Tales From the Crypt* and *Dracula*. Finally, there are rumors that a major Japanese manufacturer, best known for some incredible success in video, is planning to launch a pinball division.

In addition, continuing what has become a Grand Slam circuit for pinball players, this month finds the next jewel in the crown taking place with the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) 3rd Annual World Pinball Championships being staged at the Grand Milwaukee Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday,

May 21st, to Sunday, the 23rd. More information is available by calling IFPA headquarters at 414-263-0233.

Whether you fancy yourself a true pinball wizard or just a novice flipper ace, the leading manufacturers have created



some remarkable efforts that take full advantage of the latest technological innovations, along with solid playfield designs that should keep you enter-

tained and challenged for many weeks and months to come.

A new, emerging company, Alvin G. & Co., which we reported on a few months back when they introduced their first two player, end-to-end pinball machine, is back with a conventional flipper game called *Al's Garage Band Goes On a World Tour*. And as a player that's just what you'll need to do as you attempt to get all the band members together and perform gigs in various cities around the world.

The music is hard-rockin' and the action fast-paced with some of the more interesting features you'll encounter on *World Tour* being an elevated guitar that activates an array of different scoring modes, a CD-style spinning disc ramp for gaining entry to 3-ball multiball and possible jackpots, and a thumping video game mode where hitting the flipper buttons will send you on a drum solo played out on the dot matrix display.

Williams Electronics continues to make a splash in pinball with the unveiling of *White Water* where the objective is to travel by raft down the river to get to Wet Willie's River Ranch. However, there are a number of hazards in your way including Insanity Falls, Big Foot Bluff, Boomerang Bend, Disaster Drop, No Way Out, the Spine Chiller and the Boulder Garden.

Following the success of *The Addams Family*, both Williams Electronics and sister company Bally/Midway, have taken a design approach that has resulted in a greater depth of game rules and more fully crafted storylines for all their pinball machines. And *White Water* is no exception to the new rule, even with the inclusion of a top cabinet-mounted Motion Picture waterfall.

Apart from the twisting and turning multi-level, playfield layout, for the intrepid pinball player there are a number of nooks and crannies to discover and explore whether it's to gain access to 3 ball multi-ball action or a special Gold Rush, two-ball mode where you can earn

250,000 points for every hit target or switch. Add in swirling whirlpools, Big Foot guarding his cave or getting angry when you give him a hot foot, and **White Water** will plunge you into an intriguing world that's uniquely its own.

Having already tapped into the video game arena for subject matter and theme as evidenced by their **Super Mario** pinball machines, Premier Technology is hoping to strike it rich with the release of their latest Gottlieb pinball, **Street Fighter II**. The phenomenon that has swept the world's game players now provides the underpinnings for a faithful adaptation that should please any of the fans of Ken, Ryu, Guile, Blanka, Balrog, Chun Li, Sagat and the remaining cast of video celebrities.

Under license from Capcom, **Street Fighter II** pinball unleashes a dazzling set up of ramps, elevated metal ball guides and drop holes all dedicated to activating various characters when lit in your quest to defeat each of the warriors and gain the right to compete in a Champion Challenge bonus scoring mode. However, to reach this level, you'll find that Premier has developed a well-crafted storyline where you, as the player, can select your own destiny, with many of the features displayed on the dot matrix as specific intervals.

Do you want to choose adding letters to G-U-L-E in the hope of scoring 50 million points or enter 2-ball multiball action for the chance to build values to an amazing 300 million points? Is the Car Crunch to your liking? Well, for this there's a little mini-playfield beneath the main board with its own flipper and ball and a limited time to crunch back a car for increased scoring. And rounding out the advanced values, spell out T-O-R-P-E-D-O to try 3-ball play where every target and switch will earn you anywhere from 2 to 5 million points per hit.

If Jay Ward were still alive, he would undoubtedly be pleased by the renewed popularity of his star creations, Rocky

and Bullwinkle. From regular airings on Nickelodeon and a host of licensed merchandise, the moose and squirrel have done quite well for themselves. And now Data East brings them to the world of pinball along with Sherman, Peabody, Nell, the Wabac machine and much, much more, in **Rocky and Bullwinkle**.

Combining some outstanding graphics that really pay homage to this cartoon institution, the talented designers and programmers at Data East have served up a feast for the senses with Rocky and Bullwinkle never performing better. There are long, fluid, flowing ramps, tri-

Rounding out this month's offerings is Midway Manufacturing Company's licensed effort of a true original movie classic. Born in the 1950s, **Creature From The Black Lagoon** jumps to the present in a Bally pinball that actually presents the Creature in an animated

3-D hologram from beneath the depths of the playfield during a dramatic 2-ball multiball sequence where life meets art.

The storyline of **Creature From The Black Lagoon** finds players transported back in time to the Starlight Drive-In. Pay your admission, visit the snack bar, and check out the action at the slide and playground because the featured presentation is about to begin—and when it does, the Creature reaches out to grab your date. Now, it's a frantic search in underground caverns to rescue the girl before she becomes a part of movie history, and earn jackpots as well as super jackpots that can award hundreds of millions of points.

Creature From The Black Lagoon serves up an incredible 16 modes of play, multi-level ramps, all-new Dot-Mation animation with Synchro-Sound and a rocking musical score highlighted by such licensed Fifties' favorites as "Summer-time Blues," "Get a Job"

and "Rock Around the Clock."

For pinball, life has never been better and the best is still to come, not to mention the ongoing development in video game action that promises to be even more amazing. The manufacturers of these fine pinball machines are hoping to bring the games up to their former elite status. If **Rocky and Bullwinkle** and **Creature From The Black Lagoon** do well, we can expect more in the future. And so, until next time, as always, keep playing and have some fun!



ball action for jackpots and even backglass animation where Bullwinkle can pull rhinos, lions or Rocky out of his hat.

Add in a rescue of Nell from a moving saw, as well as more than a dozen special scoring modes including Loose Moose, Looping Bonus, Bomb Round, and a chance to travel back in time in the Wabac Machine, and it's easy to understand that **Rocky and Bullwinkle** features enough high energy excitement to keep players coming back for more.

The Good...



The Bad...



And The Butt-Ugly.



In the Old West, you couldn't tell the bad guys from the good guys by how ugly they were (you had to rely on the color of their hats). But in *Freddy Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist*, even a scrawny, sissified, one-eared Pharmacist can be a good guy.

Al Lowe, creator of Leisure Suit Larry, spins a yarn of schoolmarm and chorus girls with hearts o'gold, cowboys and Indians, and varmints and heroes. It's the brand-new, age-old tale of Freddy Pharkas, a gunslinger who gave it all up for his love of pharmacology. Together with his faithful Indian companion, S'rini Bagdnish, Freddy sets out to save bucolic, boring



Coarsegold from a fate worse than Hollywood adaptation.

So don't just groan at all those old horse-opera clichés. Be one. Strap on your spurs for a saga that skewers every Western under the sun. Mosey on down to your software store and ask for *Freddy Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist*. And smile when you say that.



See your local retailer or call 1-800-326-6654.



GAME DOCTOR

technology is read-only and requires an additional storage device for saving games.

We have already heard that the 3DO will offer a battery-based storage device with adequate space for saving multiple games-in-progress.

As for the difference between the old Turbo Duo CD and the new Super CD, the primary improvement in the new unit is increased buffer space. Here's how it works: many games, especially arcade games which feature a variety of different worlds, use the CD to store all the information, then parcel it out, as needed, into the system's buffer. This saves access time and increases the rate at which the graphics are displayed on-screen. The problem with the original CD was that its buffer was too small to hold sufficient game data. Therefore, the Super-CD was designed with additional buffer space.

Finally, regarding Atari's latest foray into the world of video game technology, the Jaguar has actually garnered reactions ranging from impressed to very impressed from the lucky few who've actually seen it run through its paces. Its sole weakness seems to be a lack of onboard RAM, a crucial weakness if this system hopes to compete with systems such as the 3DO. Otherwise, though, the Jaguar may be the best place of entertainment-oriented technology to issue from Atari's workshop since the Lynx.



According to Peter Haywood, the Game Doc is using some additional help!



Q: Why doesn't the Genesis or SNES have a four-control system like the 8-Bit Nintendo? I remember old times when the Atari 2600 had a game called **Warlords**, which I think was the best four-player game I have ever seen.

Jesus M. Reveles
San Luis, AZ

A: At press time, neither Sega nor Nintendo have announced peripherals similar to the NES expander device which allows more than two players to compete simultaneously. I wouldn't be surprised to see such a device in the near future, however, once software developers begin producing games which could exploit such a feature. It would be quite a nice improvement to have a group of electronic gaming enthusiasts all participating in the same game at exactly the same time. Talk about intense player competition!

By the way, you have excellent taste, Jesus—**Warlords** is one of the Doc's all-time favorite games. And you should have seen the coin-op version, in which the bouncing ball was depicted as a flaming furball coughed up by a dyspeptic dragon!

Q: I've read several references to new technological features in both the Genesis and SNES, and now I'd like an explanation in English. Regarding the Genesis, what is "blast processing" and "DPA" and, on the SNES, what, exactly, does the FX chip do? I'm confused on you to cut through the gibberish, Doc, so don't fail me.

Steven Hampshire
Lenox, MA

A: I'll do my best, Steve. According to Sega, Blast Processing is a feature in which the Genesis diverts all its available power to the task of moving a single sprite, or character (such as Sonic or Tails in **Sonic 2**), at maximum speed for a short burst. It seems to be related to Sega's sophisticated compression capa-

bilities. DPA stands for Dynamic Play Adjustment and is actually a form of Artificial Intelligence (AI). What happens is that the system monitors the play level of the gamer currently engaging the software and automatically adjusts the difficulty level to produce an appropriate skill setting. It releases the need for difficulty settings and will recalibrate the skill level every time the gamer sits

down to play.

Nintendo's vaunted Super FX is actually a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) chip capable of high speed calculations on certain types of problems. Although not as powerful as the SNES' CPU, it is much more specialized and can produce real-time, 3-D effects using sophisticated overlapping polygon animation. The Super FX also permits texture



Here, Matt Clarke sees the Game Doc as an intense gaming medical maven!

mapping, a process in which an image can be "wrapped around" a wire frame object. In other words, let's say you've drawn or photographed the exterior of an office building. You could then construct a rectangular, wire frame box and literally wrap the exterior image around the box, creating a three-dimensional structure. Then, as the structure is moved about the screen, the FX chip automatically calculates the new position and redraws it in correct proportion as seen from any angle.

And it looks as if we've run out of space for this issue. Keep sending those great letters. I sure love reading and answering them! Until next time, don't forget the address to cure your ills:

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FANDOM CENTRAL

Pubbing Your Ish

by Amie Katz

I get letters, a lot of letters. Sometimes I have to cart them away in big mailing baskets.

A surprising number come from readers who are intrigued by the idea of a fanzine, but don't exactly know how to produce one. As much as I'd like to answer each of you individually, time pressure compels me to take the easy way out and cover the rudiments of fanzine production in this installment of Fandom Central.

The first thing to consider is why you want to do a fanzine. Fanwriting provides practice that, with time and improvement, may lead to professional journalism, but none of these little publications will metamorphose into a prozine. (I unflinchingly draw flack from the more juvenile fans when I say this. I am more concerned with reality than anyone's private fantasy.)

Among many reasons to publish a fanzine: communication, meeting like-minded enthusiasts, the desire to entertain, and the chance to put your personal stamp on something creative.

The next step is to pick the basic format. Choose a size and frequency that jibe with your available free time. It's worth remembering that a 12-page fanzine, folded and stapled, usually squeaks in at 29¢, while a 24-pager is safely within the 52¢ first-class rate. If money is tight, consider a less frequent, larger publication.

You can get mailing lists from the NAEGE or other faneds. I'd recommend starting with 50-100 names. That's enough to insure a good response in the form of letter of comment, contributions and other fanzines in trade. Professional magazines aggressively seek circulation, because it relates directly to their ad rates, but fanzines should strive for a quality audience. Besides, label typing and collating are two of the less pleasant jobs, and you'll do less of it with a

more compact mailing list.

The physical aspects of fanzine production only seem mysterious until you try it. There's no one right way; it all depends on what equipment you have.

Almost every student has some access to a mimeograph or spirit duplicator. These work well, though they aren't popular with most fans. You can either type stencils on a conventional typewriter, or use camera-ready copy to make electronic stencils and then run those.

The most popular way to do a fanzine is with some form of desktop publishing system. I use **Publish It! Easy** on my Macintosh, along with **Typestyler** to create headings. I generate hard copy with an Apple LaserWriter, and then duplicate the issue on a Gestetner copier.

PC owners can use the features of **Microsoft Word** or employ a more specialized program such as **Pagemaker** to achieve comparable results.

Pasting photos and drawings into place on the page before printing works well, but full-page scanners have recently dropped to a price within the reach of many pocketbooks. PlusTek's ScanPlus black and white unit, which is available for either PC or Macintosh, retails for about \$300. A scanner lets the editor integrate graphics into the page layouts in more imaginative ways. The editor feeds the artwork into the machine, which creates a computer file that can be pasted right into the desktop file.

Some fanzines are run off on printers. I don't recommend that. Not only is it more expensive than cheap copying, but one-side printing causes higher postage bills.

Envelopes get the fanzine to readers in pristine condition, but aren't necessary. Print the return address on the back page, fold and staple, and add a self-adhesive label to produce a reasonably mail-worthy parcel.

Next time, I'll offer 10 tips for new fanzine editors to make that first issue something you can recall with a smile, not a shudder.

Moving from the theoretical to the practical, it's time to romp through this month's most interesting fanzines.

Video Gaming Monthly 2/10

Edited by Alex Frias
265 Cherry St., 6J, New York, NY 10002
Monthly, \$1.50 per issue, 26 pages

A new laser printer and scanner give this fine frequent fanzine a fresh look. Alex pulls off some nice effects, like superimposing a drawing of Sonic over a feature about the sequel.

The main article, by the editor, covers the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. Alex includes some photos of the new games, which adds interest.

Photos also enliven Frias' fanzine reviews. He knows his stuff, and he's developing into one of the field's foremost fanzine critics.

Another important piece is a direct comparison of the Duo and Sega CD by Assistant Editor, Tom Fulp. Fulp also pens a provocative column that could use both a less mundane title and a little judicious editing.

James Statz starts a new column in this issue. His forceful opinions should feed **Video Gaming Monthly's** letter column.

The most controversial piece is "Buried Alive." Jess Ragan, one of this year's top neofans, analyzes the future decline and fall of the Genesis. Some may say that he's rushing the season, but I defy anyone to stop reading.

Alex shows what a talented and persistent fanned (fanzine editor) can accomplish. **VGM** belongs in your mailbox.

IntelliVision Lines #6

Edited by Ralph Linne
8385 Findley Dr., Mentor, OH
44060-3811

Quarterly, \$1.25 per copy, 8 pages

It's this simple: If you care about the IntelliVision, Mattel's classic video game system, you will want this well-produced fanzine. Frankly, even if your IntelliVision

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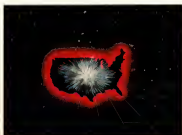
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FANDOM CENTRAL

is gathering dust in the closet or was donated to the last charity drive, the memories this inspires are easily worth the modest price.

Ralph presents a potpourri of news, reviews, and articles sure to catch the fancy of any INTV partisan. A report on CES and a history of the system get the nod as the issue's best items, but everything was well done. Ralph has a talent for cramming a tremendous amount of stuff into a small number of pages, without sacrificing good layout.

This is the first issue of **Intellivision Lines** I've seen. I eagerly anticipate future ones.

The Videogame Trader #4

Edited by Tim Duarte

Box N664, Westport, MA 02790-0606
Bi-weekly, \$6 for six issues, 2 pages

This fanzine embodies a clever concept that should make it a fixture on the fanzine scene. It's a frequent publication that prints advertisements from those who want to buy, sell or trade video games.

Tim Duarte is an experienced fanpublisher. His expertise shows plainly in this slickly produced adzine. He's been looking for a way to add hard-to-find games to your collection or have some games to unload, a trial subscription makes a lot of sense.

In Between the Lines #1

Edited by Sean Pettibone

2406 Red Maple Ct., Troy, MI 48098
Bi-monthly, 75¢ per issue, 8 pages

Some folks plunge into fanatic, while others ease into the hobby. Sean is one of the latter. He's written for quite a few fanzines, and now he's produced his own.

The payoff for such research is an excellent first issue that's better than the third or fourth editions of most of the fanzines sent to me for review.

If Sean has a fanish influence, it's probably Lance Rice. **In Between the**

Lines has the same striking mix of easy-going humor and highly opinionated commentary. Sean doesn't quite reach Rice's heights, but then Lance is one of fandom's reigning BNFs (big name fans), and it isn't reasonable to expect Sean to leap to the same level in his first solo effort.

Sean's capsule reviews show that he sets high standards for games and isn't shy about low-rating those that don't measure up to his expectations. It's a nice change from the over-enthusiastic reviews sometimes found in newer zines. I hope future reviews will be longer, though, so he has room to go into his points at greater length.

"Now Hear This" sounds a sour note. It presents the editor's side of a heated personal disagreement with Chris Johnston of **Paradox**. I suppose feuds are inevitable, but that doesn't make such material any more pleasant for us bystanders. Without commenting on the justice of either party's claims, it is a shame to see two such talented and enthusiastic fans at loggerheads.

At any rate, Sean promises that this is his last word on the subject. Starting next issue, "Now Hear This" will contain the editor's viewpoints on various fan events and situations.

In Between the Lines is a very attractive fanzine. Crisply reproduced photos and cute spot illustrations display flair for graphics. Few premiere issues are so stylish.

At 75¢ a copy, this fanzine is a true bargain. Sean is looking for readers and contributors. With such a promising start, he should find good help soon.

The Shape of Gaming to Come #7

Edited by Darren Krolewski

38150 Mt.Kisco, Sterling Heights, MI 48310

Irregular, \$1 per issue, 20 pages

The physical production of this irregular, but top-quality, fanzine sets a lofty standard of sophistication. This is the first fanzine, to my knowledge, to use spiral binding instead of conventional metal staples. The interior pages aren't fancy, but I've seldom seen a neater presentation.

The written material is, if anything, even better than the graphics. Darren concentrates on the cutting edge of electronic gaming, whether it's hand-helds, arcades or home cartridge systems. Darren might want to consider adding computer coverage to complete the picture, since some of the most important hardware and software developments come

out of that segment of the hobby.

Darren's editorial gets humorous mileage out of his embarrassment about the lateness of this issue. I'm glad he did this comic turn, but I hope he isn't really fretting over the sporadic appearance of **TSOGTC**. It isn't the most regular fanzine, but its quality more than makes amends for its leisurely schedule.

The lead feature is a solid article, complete with photos, about the arcade game **Reality Rocket**. Darren believes it represents a milestone in coin-op design, and his intensive analysis provides all the relevant information.

Other arcade machines under the microscope include **Virtual Racing**, **Mad Dog II**, **Space Lords** and the forthcoming "Star Trek" coin-op centers. There's even a page about trends in pinball!

He doesn't neglect home games, though. There's a long introduction to the TTI Duo, a look at advanced technology, and plenty of short video game reviews for the popular consoles. Darren also has a lengthy review of the January Consumer Electronics Show that is a worthwhile complement to the coverage in the professional magazines.

Darren is doing a great job with his fanzine. Make sure you're on the mailing list for his next issue.

Totally Super NES #8

Edited by Andy Saito

3216 Colebrook Ct., Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L5N 3E2

Frequent, \$1.50 per issue, 16 pages

Canada's top video game fanzine roars into 1993 with its best issue yet. Andy Saito has become a major new voice in fandom, and his zine is going to be a contender for next year's "Best Fanzine" award.

He's not going to rest on his laurels. A front-page editorial promises longer reviews, more attractive headings and a more personal editorial stance. It's great to see a faned who won't rest until his publication reaches the elite class.

Full-page reviews treat **Super Star Wars**, **Double Dragon**, **Death Valley Rally**, and **Mystic Quest**. The issue also includes a double-page spread of the best games of the year and tips for popular titles. Also of interest are the lengthy editorial and a SNES glossary.

Attention fanzine editors!

If you would like to see your fanzines reviewed in **EG**, send them to:

Arnie Katz
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Las Vegas, NV 89107

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PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FRENZIED FIGHTING



PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FRENZIED FIGHTING



by Arnie Katz

Violent confrontation is the essence of the hottest action games. Sometimes, it's firing tank guns or space cannons at distant enemies, but many of today's biggest sellers feature fighting at close quarters. In some games, the contestants wield martial arts implements, but often it's just feet and fists to a finish.

Out in the Streets

Apart from roleplaying games, few genres depend more heavily on sequels than the furious man-to-man combat contests. Featuring the same characters again and again in (hopefully) new and exciting situations builds up the connection between player and character.



The extremely popular *Street Fighter II* has become a true milestone game.

Until the debut of *Mortal Kombat*, *Streets of Rage II* (Sega/Genesis) was probably the biggest rival to *Street Fighter II* in the cartridge world. When the underworld captures Adam Hunter, Axel Stone and Blaze Fielding recruit two new teammates, Max and

Skate, and go after their buddy and his captors. This smooth-playing game for one or two sports fine graphics and animation. The varied capabilities of the hero team add some strategic nuances to the chop-and-kick frenzy.

Two-player action is again the big draw in *Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stones* (Flying Edge/Genesis). Hiruko sends his protégés, Jimmy and Billy, fighting in five different parts of the world to gather three Rosetta stones.

The trail leads to Egypt, where the heroes confront a Formless Evil that menaces the whole planet. It doesn't have the same sparkle as the earlier episodes, but *Double Dragon 3*'s slick graphics and fast action will please fans of this interactive epic. Virgin Games will

a hit several years ago.

TNNT: The Hyperstone Heist (Konami/Genesis, SNES) is the latest in a line of successful martial arts romps starring the celebrated heroes on the half-shell. When Shredder and his Foot Soldiers swipe Manhattan Island and the Statue of Liberty, the comic book heroes battle to get them back. Although each turtle totes a signature weapon, the main gripe against this five-level contest is that it could've used a little more variety.

Also swinging out of the comics and movies onto the game screen is **Batman Returns!** (Genesis). The play-mechanics and fighting is quite similar to *The Hyperstone Heist*, but the flourishes of the cape and dark, moody graphics are distinctive.

Fight! Fight! Fight!

Combat in the Streets and Arenas

be doing a Game Gear version of *Double Dragon* in the near future.

Marian's kidnapping by the Black Shadow Warriors ignites *Super Double Dragon* (Trade West/SNES). Jimmy and Billy bash and kick through seven levels to get her back. One or two players control Billy and Jimmy Lee.

Shinobi III (Sega/Genesis) hopes to return Shinobi to the high status the fighter enjoyed in the original *Shinobi*. The game, planned for next fall, has the massive characters and intense action that made the first chapter of this saga such





Even the Caped Crusader joins the growing field of hand-to-hand combat.

The First Samurai (Kemco/SNES) is a thinking gamer's fighting game. It offers lots of sword-swinging action as the hero struggles through five tough levels with a



Ultimate Fighter featured impressive graphics and enhanced sound effects.

boss at the end of each. There are some adventure elements in this one, as well as a dash of magic in the form of friendly spirits who slice through enemies in an instant.

Ultimate Fighter (Culture Brain/SNES) encompasses the best of both worlds—there's street fighting and a tournament. After the bad guys raid the training center, steal important symbols, and leave a challenging letter, it's up to Rick to go on a quest to regain the revered objects.

Up to eight gamers can guide competitors through the martial arts tournament. The eight-meg cart boasts excellent graphics with huge, and intricately animated, fighting heroes.

The Digital Dojo

These games present pure fighting without the real-world context of titles like **Street Fighter II**. They prune away all non-essentials to focus on detailed simulation of martial arts moves and counter-moves in a variety of exotic settings.

Deadly Moves (Kaneco/Genesis) portrays the hero's around-the-world quest for glory in battles against a diverse

assortment of fighting stars. Besides the usual kicks, jumps and punches, each competitor possesses a special maneuver. Joe acquires these deadly moves when he defeats their owners, giving him extra power to take on the increasingly tough opponents. Large characters and excellent animation, especially the special attack modes, stamps **Deadly Moves** as an outstanding combat title.

Street Combat (Irem/SNES), despite its name, is more like the arena fighting titles than **Mortal Kombat** or **SFII**. Few games have done more to individualize the settings for the man-to-man action. **Street Combat**'s battles take place in unusual locales such as the jungle, the back of a truck, a skyscraper beam and in a back alley. Like many of the new cartridges, it can be played solitaire or by two cooperating gamers.

Also migrating from the arcades to home systems is **Pit Fighter** (Tengen/Genesis). Animated, digitized images depict the martial arts prowess of three different heroes. The ultimate foe is a champion known only as the Masked Warrior.

Each has different abilities. Buzz, the wrestler, employs power holds, a head butt and body slam. Kato, a third degree black belt, uses combination punches, the flip kick, and the backhand blow. Ty is the master of the spin, flyin' and roundhouse kicks.

The action—and the hero—gets heavy in **Sumo Fighter** (DTMC/Game Boy). You've



Best of the Best Championship Karate allows players to use genuine moves.

got to pack on the poundage to defeat innumerable enemies and challenge opponents in thumb wrestling, arm wrestling and sumo. The one-player contest offers 15 stages of action at a choice of three skill levels.

Best of the Best Karate (Electro Brain/SNES) puts you in the running for the International Karate Championship. The fighter starts as the 16th ranked karate master in the world and advances to the ultimate confrontation, a full-contact fracas called the Kumate. Detailed, atmospheric graphics and finely rendered, large characters provide an exceptional view of the unfolding matches.

Fighting Continues

The best is yet to come... **Mortal Kombat** is coming to home systems this summer, under the Acclaim banner, and



it looks like **Street Fighter II** is now earmarked for a Genesis edition to complement the SNES super-hit. These two releases are sure to keep the martial arts game field at fever pitch through 1993. That means many other publishers are likely to develop new fighting contests in an effort to catch sales lightning in a cartridge.

Meanwhile, coin-op manufacturers aren't resting on their laurels. Like the heroes of many of the games, they are learning new moves and fresh techniques for use when dreaming up the next generation of machines. Given the track record of arcade-derived fighting games in the home market, these next generation products can be expected to spin off to many home versions for 16-bit consoles within a year of their amusement center unveiling.

PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FRENZIED FIGHTING



There's a problem with simulating professional wrestling that doesn't exist anywhere else in the electronic sports gaming field: pro wrestling isn't a sport.

To be sure, its performers are often gifted athletes who risk life and limb every time they step into the squared circle. But pro wrestling is not a competitive sport. It is a choreographed entertainment creatively blending particular elements from soap operas, freestyle wrestling and the National Stunt Man Championships.



Nintendo's *Pro Wrestling* was one of the first wrestling games for home systems.

Wrestling matches follow a dramatic scenario, rather than a competitive one. Very few baseball games, for example, see the home team come from behind to win in the bottom of the ninth via a grand slam homer. Football games won with three seconds on the clock as the quarterback—in his farewell performance, of course—lobs a 90 yard grenade to a rookie wide out, become the stuff of legend. But in a pro wrestling match, the only limitation to a soul-stirring conclusion lays within the imagination of the

"booker," the gentleman who determines the winner of each match and how it will all go down.

For this reason, even those electronic wrestling games that utilize real grapplers are hard pressed to produce reliable ratings and statistical probabilities that will result in a solid simulation.

In the real world of pro graps, for example, wrestlers are "pushed"—built up by the promoters and allowed high profile wins against established opponents—for a variety of reasons, very few of them having to do with their actual wrestling ability. Some of the most successful pro wrestlers in history, from Gorgeous George to Hulk Hogan—couldn't wrestle their way out of a potato sack. But they looked good, did knockout interviews, and possessed truly astonishing charisma.

Physiques, charm and oratorical skills, however, are hardly the meat and potatoes of sports simulations. The challenge for an electronic wrestling simulation is to present a game in which the matches flow in a manner reminiscent of the grappling seen on television every weekend.

When Vince McMahon's WWF (World Wrestling Federation) caught fire nationally in the mid to late '80s, software publishers were right there, attempting to capture that magic in a bottle. Most failed, but a few scored impressive pin-falls. Nintendo's own *Pro Wrestling* for the NES remains one of the most realistically paced grappling simulations ever produced. Natsume has a new grappling entry for the NES, *Natsume Championship Wrestling*, due later this year. Acclaim, meanwhile, birthed an entire library of wrestling hits with its *WWF WrestleMania* and, more recently, *WWF WrestleMania Steel Cage Challenge*, both for the NES.

FCI was less than successful with its license from WCW (World Championship Wrestling), formerly the NWA (National Wrestling Association), and the number two promotion in the United States. *WCW Wrestling* highlighted the problems involved in licensing promotions rather than individual wrestlers; the wrestlers who appeared on the game box, the tag team of the Road Warriors,

left for the WWF soon after the game hit the stores. Then again, no sooner did LJN's *WWF Super WrestleMania* for the SNES show up, also starring the Road Warriors (known as the Legion of Doom at this point for contractual reasons), than the legendary team broke up.

Of course, licensing a wrestler rather than a promotion doesn't guarantee success, either. Jesse "The Body" Ventura lost his announcing gig with the WWF



Wrestlemania Challenge featured some intense, hard-hitting tag team action.

when he signed an independent deal with Dreamworks for a Genesis game entitled *Jesse "The Body" Ventura Wrestling Superstars*. Not only was the WWF miffed that Jesse would sign a contract without permission from Big Brother, but the use of the "Superstars" name in the title sent them over the edge: "Superstars of Wrestling" is the WWF's number one syndicated TV show, after all, and has been for nearly a decade. In any case, the game was a total dud, even with The Body's silver tongue supporting it, and it no longer even appears as part of the Dreamworks catalog.

With all this in mind, let's run down the current electronic wrestling scene, which is almost totally dominated by Acclaim's WWF licenses (published through its subsidiaries LJN and Flying Edge).

WWF Super Wrestlemania (LJN/SNES) is a beautiful looking game that does a superb job of recreating wrestling's ring ambience. Hulk Hogan, the Undertaker, Sid Justice (no longer with the WWF), Ted DiBiase, Animal (retired from wrestling), Hawk (now in Japan), Earthquake,

Matching the Mat Maniacs

Typhoon, Jake Roberts (no longer with the WWF) and Randy "Macho Man" Savage are all on hand for one or two-player action in singles, tag team and "Survivor Series" matches.

The Survivor Series format is a bogus reproduction of the battle royal format pioneered by Titan (the WWF's corporate umbrella). Instead of an actual Survivor Series, **Super WrestleMania's** version is a four-man tag bout with eliminations. Only two men from each team are involved at any one time, but once a wrestler has been pinned, he is immediately replaced by a grappler off the bench.

This game's only real weakness is the lack of signature moves. Every wrestler has the same repertoire of body slams, vertical suplexes, hip tosses, etc., but the maneuvers that made these men famous—such as Jake "the Snake" Roberts' DDT and the Hulkster's Legdrop—are painfully absent.

This omission is remedied, however, in the upcoming **WWF Super WrestleMania 2** (LJN/SNES), a 16-meg powerhouse containing 14 Titan superstars, each executing their trademark moves. This update also includes a No-Holds-Barred scenario, complete with eye gouges that would make the 3 Stooges wince, and a 6-man "Rumble" style tag team match.

We also see trademark moves in the Genesis version of **WWF Super WrestleMania** from Flying Edge. The graphics are not quite as impressive as the SNES

version, but the specialized moves and appearances by Hogan, the Ultimate Warrior, Papa Shango, Ted DiBiase, the British Bulldog help put this game over.

Even the portable systems are getting into the act. LJN has upgraded its earlier Game Boy WWF entry with **WWF Superstars 2**. And for those grap fans who prefer their portable play in color, Flying Edge has a version of **WWF WrestleMania Steel Cage Challenge** for the Game Gear. In addition to its portable titles, Flying Edge has wrestling fanatics everywhere drooling over **WWF Super WrestleMania** for the Sega CD, due this summer. Twenty-four wrestlers, including Randy Savage, the Undertaker and Ric Flair are scheduled to appear, providing gamers with a large wrestler base.

Pro wrestling has had its ups and downs in recent years, but the electronic simulations couldn't be healthier. So bring on your piledrivers, your clotheslines and



your DDTs; wrestling's never been better, and it doesn't hurt when it's electronic!

—Bill Kunkel

A Wrestling Insider Looks at the Simulations

Because of the secrecy involved in the pro wrestling business, our expert insisted that we refer to him only as "Mr. X." After viewing and, reluctantly, playing some of the better simulations, he made the following comments.

"Well, from my point of view, this is all too confusing. I mean, I got one set of instructions when the wrestlers are facing off, another when they're locked up, another when one guy is down, etc. etc. I'm lucky I can remember one set of commands, much less half a dozen!

"Well, obviously it has nothing to do with wrestling—at least from the point of view of the wrestler. I'm putting on a show out there, so having me play a game like this is like having an actor go out there and start making up his own lines and inventing his own scenes. But this

game [**WWF Super WrestleMania** for the SNES], even though everybody has the same moves, it does a pretty fair job of looking like a wrestling match.

"Actually, this game you said was, like, seven years old [**Pro Wrestling** (Nintendo/NES)] is really great! It has different types of wrestlers with individualized moves and it really plays like a wrestling match. But they all have this problem where we're both pressing buttons like crazy and I can't figure out what determines whose move works, you know?

"The area where they're all weak, though, is in the transitions. Wrestling isn't just a series of flashy moves. If that were the case, people would be bored to death in five minutes. Wrestling is drama: you have to build up to the big moments, and these games really don't do that. But, like I said, some of them do a good job of making [the players] feel like they're in a wrestling match, and that's the point, I guess."

Mr. X Rates the Wrestling Games:

Favorite Games: WWF Super WrestleMania (LJN/SNES) ("The visuals are really nice and the animations are very, very smooth. It has a nice look."); **Pro Wrestling** (Nintendo/NES) ("Great variety of moves and it's just a hell of a lot of fun to play. This would be the best if they did it on these new machines.")

Least Favorites: WWF WrestleMania (Acclaim/NES) ("What're they kidding with these guitars and medals floating across the ring? I thought I saw something like that happen in one of my matches and I stopped drinking then and there."); **WWF Superstars 2** (LJN/Game Boy) ("I'm supposed to be able to see this? I thought I've taken too many shots to the eyes, but I can't even tell what's supposed to be going on!"); **Jesse "The Body" Ventura Wrestling Superstars** (Dreamworks/Genesis) ("I really love Jesse, but this game is really putrid. Sorry, dude.")

PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FRENZIED FIGHTING



FIGHT!

The largest rivalry in the arcade industry has to be **Street Fighter II** vs. **Mortal Kombat**. For months, these two leaders of the fighting game genre have been duking it out with no end in sight. At first, **Street Fighter II** was the undisputed champion of fighting games. Then, from out of nowhere, **Mortal Kombat** hit the scene, sporting highly advanced digitized graphics and sounds rivaling CD quality. Each game is jammed full of high-paced fighting action, and no other game has come close in popularity. While some players like both games equally, most have developed a preference between the two. This is the debate that still rages today and probably will continue as more new sequels arrive in the years to come.

Objectively, both games are excellent, but could stand to be improved. After the arrival of **Mortal Kombat**, Capcom responded by creating not one, but two fantastic upgrades to **Street Fighter II**.

Originally, **Street Fighter II** consisted of eight selectable main characters, followed by four computer-controlled bosses. While intensely popular and fun, the game was horribly lopsided towards the characters

Guile and Dhalsim. All one had to do to hog a machine was master these two characters. When played correctly, they were unstoppable! The Champion Edition upgrade changed this slightly by adding the four bosses as player-controllable characters, and modifying the existing characters in an attempt to even out the matches. It also added the ability to play same character matches, a much-needed new feature. One popular modification was the new differences between Ken and Ryu, two of the three characters who survived the conversion from the first **Street Fighter** machine, also known as **Fighting Street** in Japan and on the TurboGrafx-CD.

Originally, these two fighters were the same in every detail except appearance. Now, while retaining the same special attacks, their power, speed and range have been altered to affectively separate their individual talents. Another added benefit of the Champion Edition upgrade was the complete redrawing of several characters. Each World Warrior now had more detail and color, and after all was said and done, they looked buff and ready to rumble! Even though the enhanced game play did have more depth, it was still lopsided, once again favoring Guile, but this time only M. Bison, the last boss character, could keep up with him. Much had to be done to round out the characters, and that's where the Turbo Edition (Hyper Fighting) upgrade came in.

The Turbo Edition doesn't seem much different than Champion Edition at first glance, but nothing could be further from the truth! All characters now have methods to avoid or cancel fireballs, one of the largest complaints from several players. The speed has been increased about 20%, hence the title Turbo Edition. The most powerful characters are toned down to avoid lop-sided matches, and the weakest characters have gained considerable speed and power to overcome previous disadvantages. Of course, as with any upgrade, new strategies may have to be discovered to once tip the scales in a particular fighter's favor. One dark side to this upgrade is the incredible emergence of illegal bootleg upgrades claiming to be Capcom's

ARCADE WAR I

official Turbo Edition. Only the official Capcom upgrade sports the subtitle, **Hyperfighting**. The illegal chip sets are an abomination to the entire arcade market, and this avid gamer will not tolerate their use. Many illegal features are multiple fireballs, no charge time, ALL moves executable in the air, switching characters between fights or even mid-round! While enticing, these versions are full of glitches, have obviously one-sided game play, and are generally no fun. Avoid these machines! Of course, the Turbo Edition wasn't just intended to please players, it was also intended to keep many gamers from migrating over to the crowded **Mortal Kombat** machines commonly found next to the **Street Fighter II** units.

Before **Mortal Kombat** was created, **Street Fighter II** was THE fighting game in the arcades. Since it's arrival,



Champion Edition was the first upgrade to the fighting classic **Street Fighter 2**.

Mortal Kombat has stolen some of the glitter from the **Street Fighter 2** scene, and understandably so. The most appealing aspect of **Mortal Kombat** is the digitized animation using live actors. The process has been refined a hundred times over since **Pit Fighter**, a short-lived fighting title over a year ago. Now the animation is fluid and clean, by far the best graphics in a video game. Another plus side (according to most players) is the existence of



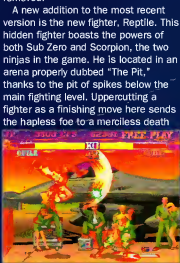
Mortal Kombat has seven main warriors, and three CPU characters.

Fatalities. **Fatalities** are the end-all be-all of finishing moves, as your fighter deftly executes his (or her) opponent in various gruesome ways. The gore factor is high in **Mortal Kombat**, as each fighter loses gallons of blood during a



Champion Edition added four new fighters, and same character selection.

rough match. Even the sound effect of blood splatting on the pavement is realistic. Add in a generally well-orchestrated, morbid soundtrack and you've got **Mortal Kombat**! **Mortal Kombat** originally featured seven main player-characters and two computer boss characters, but it, like **Street Fighter 2**, underwent a severe testing and upgrade period over the past year. Originally, no same character matches were possible, but you could change characters between rounds when playing against a friend. **Mortal Kombat** also had several "cheap" glitches like multiple uppercuts and refreezes. Now, two players can select the same fighter, and most of the bad glitches were removed.



Guile is highly powerful in both the original and Champion Edition of **Street Fighter 2**.

of impaling. Sharp-eyed gamers will gleefully notice the heads of the programmers stuck on several spikes in The Pit, as well as the losers of long-forgotten battles! Only expert **Mortal Kombat** players can reach Reptile. **Mortal Kombat** also defied the standardized method of player control by implementing a Block button. Besides Block, you have a choice of a high punch, low punch, high kick and low kick. High moves are slower, but more powerful. Like **Street Fighter II**, the player must discover the hidden techniques for a fighter, as well as their Individual Fatality. The realistic game play and graphics has proven that **Mortal Kombat** is much more than just a **Street Fighter II** clone.

This brings us to the debate: which fighting game is better overall? This question will never have a definitive answer, but the comparisons remain



Goro's "claymation" antics give him a unique look and a special personality.

the same. To be honest, **Street Fighter II** is still my favorite, especially with the Turbo upgrade. Let's compare numbers. **Street Fighter II** has twelve controllable fighters, **Mortal Kombat** has seven. **Street Fighter II** has six different basic attacks, which change depending on range and motion. **Mortal Kombat** has four non-changing attacks. Blocking is a natural pulling away motion on **Street Fighter II**, while **Mortal Kombat** uses an awkward



Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyperfighting has twelve selectable world warriors.

PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FRENZIED FIGHTING



button centered between attack buttons. **Street Fighter II** fighters have unique styles, speed and power.

Mortal Kombat fighters have the same basic attacks and even similar special moves that consist of a projectile and lunging attack; only the Fatalities are distinct. Granted, the **Mortal Kombat** special moves are different in style and effectiveness, but the principle is the same. **Mortal Kombat** has very few combos, and **Street Fighter II** is riddled with several combos and multi-hit attacks. In other words, the fighters from **Street Fighter II** have individual personalities that you can feel as you play, while in **Mortal Kombat**, the action becomes repetitive. Only the boss Goro seems to have a personality all his own, but players can't use him. Overall, the game play is smoother and extremely responsive on **Street Fighter II**, as **Mortal Kombat** feels sluggish and imprecise. On the plus side for **Mortal Kombat**, however, is the graphic detail and music. Though **Street Fighter II** has excellent graphics and great sound, **Mortal Kombat** wins hands down in those departments.



Sagat and Ryu are two of the three fighting characters from Japan's **Fighting Street**.

Nobody can deny that **Mortal Kombat** looks and sounds great. The digitized graphics are innovative in itself, and can carry this title well. The CD quality music is perfect for the morbid theme, and couldn't be better! Even the gore is right on target. The characters in **Mortal Kombat** are conceptually excellent, but they need more individuality. One big factor helping **Mortal Kombat** is that it hasn't been around as long as **Street Fighter II**, and maybe some gamers feel the need to try something different, whether it's better or not. Over time, I expect many **Mortal Kombat** players to return to **Street Fighter II** to regain the varied game play it is renowned for. I did. It's not that I fear change, but graphics and sound aside, I didn't like how **Mortal Kombat** played compared to **Street Fighter II**. Obviously, when faced with facts such as these, I just can't help but favor **Street Fighter II** over **Mortal Kombat**. While many will argue over these facts, how can they? They are facts, after all. Let's face it, only a merger of these two games would please both types of players, but don't hold your breath.

Now that that's settled, hold on to your hats, because **Street Fighter III** and **Mortal Kombat II** aren't too far away! With both in development, you can guarantee that this upcoming battle will be the war of the century, with neither side taking prisoners!

What will these two promising titles hold in store for us? What new innovative changes will take place? Will **Street Fighter III** reprise some of the characters from **Fighting Street**? What happened to Retsu, Sheng Long's first disciple? Where is Sheng Long? What about Gen and Lee, the father-son team from China? Will Goro return in **Mortal**



What would happen if **Street Fighter II**'s Blanka met **Mortal Kombat**'s Raiden?



Kombat II as a player-character? Will the fighters be able to execute more specialized attacks? Will each character have multiple Fatalities? It is virtually guaranteed that these two games will be the most awaited titles in this decade so far. Expect to see major revamping, consisting of new characters, new attacks, better graphics, improved soundtracks, more secrets and mind-blowing surprises. Who will win the war? That will be a question for another time...



The four old bosses are now formidable new characters for the player to control!



Many attack ranges were extended to their true length to give players more technique.

Sushi X



The picture of M. Bison's defeated face had to be drawn and added in SF2 CE.



Many other characters had artistic plastic surgery to give them a buff, hardened look.

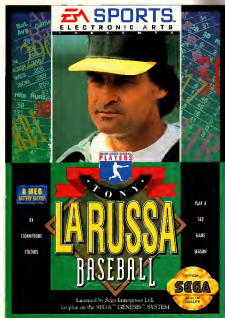
I will break you in two, you sorry excuse for a game! Only REAL fighters play Mortal Kombat!



Easily the most feared attack of SF2, Ken's Triple Dragon Punch is a crushing blow.



Envelope, please... and the winner is... Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyperfighting!!



With La Russa, you can step up to the plate for every pitch, you can call the shots as the manager, or you can watch an entire 162-game season.

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MEET THE CREATORS OF MORTAL KOMBAT

by Bill Kunkel

Quick, name a top coin-op game designer! Stumped, right? That's probably because of all the creative people involved in electronic gaming who have remained more anonymous than the designers. Even when coin-ops led the industry, when home video games were vastly simplified attempts at copying the arcade hits, the people who conceived and developed games remained shrouded in the mists of corporate secrecy. In those days, the coin-op companies were terrified to let the creator(s) of their latest hits become public knowledge, lest a competitor snatch them away.

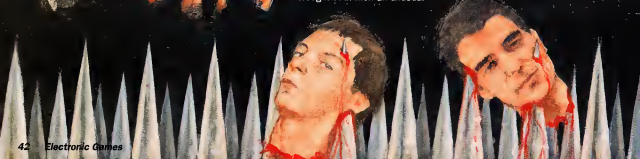
Fortunately, that mindset appears to be lessening, as we found out in an interview with Ed Boon and John Tobias, the guiding forces behind Williams' enormously successful **Mortal Kombat**.

"It has changed," project leader Ed Boon reported. "When you finish **Mortal Kombat**, we have this big theatrical ending where we scroll credits and you actually see our names. It's not like being the author of a book, for example, where your name is on the cover, but slowly it seems to be evolving to where we get a little more credit."

"To some degree, of course, the lack of recognition results from the mixing of teams. John (Tobias) worked on **Smash TV**, for example, but that was without

me, and I worked on a game called **High Impact**, and that was without John." Fortunately, things changed.

The **Mortal Kombat** project has brought both men an unusual



amount of notoriety, and they weren't at all hesitant about crediting their most famous competitor with providing the incentive for their martial arts masterpiece. "Seeing the success of [SF II] and the graphics kind of inspired us," explained Ed.

"We were originally looking at licensing Jean Claude Van Damme," John Tobias revealed. "That didn't pan out, but Ed and I still wanted to go ahead and do a rock-'em, sock-'em fighting game, so we went ahead anyway."

The unique visual presentation of **Mortal Kombat** has been one of the game's most appealing features but, interestingly enough, the basic technology wasn't new. "John was responsible for the graphics," according to Ed Boon, "but we started with the digitized graphics back with *Narc*, where we videotaped people and took those images to the computer screen."

Digitized graphics, however, present a problem which stems from the realistic nature of the images. Normal film speed



Mortal Kombat, featuring great game play, has become a huge arcade hit.

displays approximately 30 frames per second, which is unrealistic in terms of a video game. As a result, digitized game characters often appear stiff and choppy when animated. "Because of memory restraints, we have to eliminate frames here and there," John explained. "But what we did was, when the characters are in their [pre-combat] stance, we increased the frame rate, while in the action scenes we were able to get away with fewer frames." According to Ed, "The **Mortal Kombat** system, if it's

maxed out, allows us access to 64 palettes, each containing 256 colors. And the games we're producing now have 256 palettes, each containing 256 colors—or 65,536 colors," creating the great scenes.

Of course, the human eye can't really take in that many different colors simultaneously. Not only that, a recent feature in *Imaging* magazine pointed out that, in order to view the entire 24-Bit

color spectrum (which comprises almost 17 million different colors), the screen would have to be larger than 60 in. wide by 50 in. tall. As a result, monitor size is an issue close to the hearts of coin-op developers, who are not limited to a single viewing device, as home video and computer games are. "We're really shooting for bigger monitors. We used to use mostly 19 in. monitors and now everything is 25 in.," Ed told us. "And now people are looking into 31 in. monitors. Bigger-is-better is a basic formula that seems to be working pretty well for us." However, John also pointed out that on 19 in. monitors, the resolution seems crisper than it does on larger monitors.

In digitized video games, the creators require access to as many colors as possible. "We need it for shading and lighting and things like that. (For example, a character may be wearing a blue suit, but within that suit there may be 50 different shades of blue, indicating creases and wrinkles etc.)"

The game was created using a 32-Bit Texas Instruments 34010 graphics processor, designed strictly for handling graphics; along with some custom hardware developed in-house at Williams. "(This technology) moves large amounts of data from our image memory to the screen very quickly, so we were allowed to get layers of images for depth."

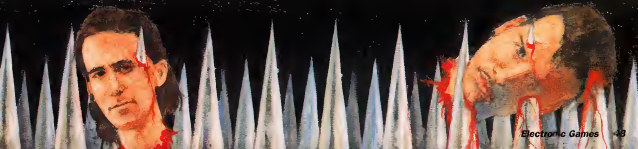
Both Ed and John are avid game players. Ed is currently absorbed in playing every street fighting game he can find in order to enhance his mastery over the



genre. "I just get into whatever I'm involved with at the time. Like when I was working on **High Impact**, I was seriously into all the sports games." John shares many of Ed's favorites, but admits that at home he prefers to play adventure games, with his current passion being **Out of This World**. "When I'm at an arcade I look more for faster action, whereas when I'm at home, I like to kind of sit back and go exploring."

And how do they feel when they see their coin-op creations translated to home video game formats? "It really depends," admitted Ed. "For example, John did **Smash TV** and **Acclaim** just did a mind-blowing job on the Super Nintendo. Stuff like that, if I'd worked on the game I'd be really proud. But when you see a version of a game where the implementation is poor, regardless of the system, it's very disappointing." The upcoming home version of **Mortal Kombat** from Acclaim, uses foreground characters ported directly from the coin-op; although the background art was extremely stripped down in the version Ed and John previewed. Still, it promises to be a faithful translation.

Finally, we had to wonder if a **Mortal Kombat II** was in the works, considering the popularity of sequels. And, while neither of the creators could give us a definitive answer, it's safe to say that fans of the original have more kicks and punches coming. "It's a definite possibility," they told us with a smile that was evident even over the phone lines.



by Russ Ceccola

Anyone familiar with animated computer games should recognize the name **Leisure Suit Larry**. A character born of the mind of wacky game designer Al Lowe, **Leisure Suit Larry** (a.k.a. Larry Laffer) gained worldwide notoriety from his (mis)adventures in places like *Lost Wages* and *Nontoonyt Island*. The **Larry** games were the first mass-market games with tongue-in-cheek, adult flavor and sold quite well despite (perhaps because of) their risqué nature. In fact, the very first **Larry** game reportedly took precedence on many computers on Wall Street shortly after its release and stopped many brokers in their tracks.



Freddy Pharkas will bring Al Lowe's humor to the old west

Al Lowe didn't want to get stuck in a rut with just one game series, so he recently applied his humor to a brand new setting—the Old West. The result is **Freddy Pharkas: Frontier Pharmacist**, full of Lowe's biting wit, zany characters, and gags so fresh that only he would dare put them in a game.

It is unlikely that even the most avid collector owns more Western-themed games than can be counted on one hand. When Al Lowe prepared for his new project, he discovered this sad fact.

"We thought about all the types of games that had already been done



(Sherlock Holmes, mysteries, etc.) and couldn't think of a good Western. We decided to make the game funny—take all the classic clichés of Westerns and twist them just a little," Lowe related. **Freddy Pharkas** does just that. Besides all the pop culture references, players will find many of the standards of Westerns, from stampedes to gunfights (although in this game the stampeding animals are sheep and the gunfights are sure to get botched in some way).

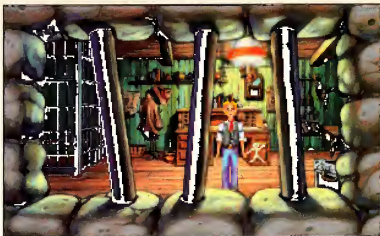
It is exactly this goofy look at Westerns that Lowe wanted to take. He confessed to dozens of viewings of *Blazing Saddles*, but promises that all of his material for **Freddy Pharkas** is original. Freddy himself is an odd little character,

trained to be a gunfighter by his father. But he rebelled against his parents as so many youngsters do and became a pharmacist instead.

His ability to concoct remedies

and other chemical conglomerations comes in quite useful in Coarsegold, CA, in 1888, the game's setting. Unfortunately, Freddy arrives in Coarsegold as things are going down the tubes; outside parties are up to no good. Freddy must help the town get back on its feet before all the residents give up and move out, and before all the merchants hit the dusty trail bankrupted from their steadily declining businesses.

Al Lowe took some time off after the design work for **Leisure Suit Larry 5** and the **Laffer Utilities** to dream up the characters in the Western adventure. "I'm very happy with the plot of this game because it was an off-season product with no big push to get it ready for Christmas



RIDING THE RANGE WITH FREDDY PHARKAS — AN INTERVIEW WITH AL LOWE —

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Now, if variety is the spice of life, Shanghai II is hot stuff indeed. For it not only gives you 13 tile layouts to try, but you can select from 11 tile designs and 6 different game modes.

Feeling competitive? Challenge the computer or an opponent to a game of Dragon's Eye where one tries to make the Dragon come to life while the other attempts to prevent it.



DRAGON'S EYE THE
ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Help yourself to Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye. But beware. Once you start, you'll never get enough!

ACTIVISION

1992, which gave me more time to flesh out the plot," Lowe remarked happily.

Freddy Pharkas will not be an easy game, but Lowe promised that all of the puzzles are logical, even if in an offbeat way. Many of the game's scenes take place inside one building or another, rather than outside; the lengthy street map acts more like a menu of building choices, providing a number of options for the player.

Humor is the most important element of **Freddy Pharkas**, after its unique setting. If anyone can create the computer equivalent of *Blazing Saddles*, Al Lowe can, especially after his sabbatical from Larry Laffer rejuvenated his creative spirit. Players will find in Coarsegold such places as the Golden Ball Saloon, P. P.'s Playhouse (already closed, of course) and the brothel "on the other side of the tracks."



Freddy Pharkas will bring many laughs and challenges to gamers.

Lots of stereotypical characters make appearances in **Freddy Pharkas** as well, including the brothel's Madame Ovary, barber Salvatore O'Hannahan, banker P. H. Balance and a distant ancestor of Larry Laffer with a strong resemblance.

There is also an abundance of sheep throughout the game. Lowe doesn't remember how the design team tended toward sheep, but they're certainly everywhere, from the dance hall to the brothel. Indeed, the game box promises lots of "sheep" laughs; one of the box art choices featured a lamb caught in a gunfight with Freddy. It's interesting to know that a bulletin board in the design room was covered with sheep gags.

Freddy Pharkas is bound to be Sierra's biggest spring title. However, Larry Laffer fans need not worry about their favorite character. He'll show up in two products in 1993: *Leisure Suit Larry VI*



and the *Laffer Calendar* for Microsoft's Windows 3.1.

Leisure Suit Larry S was a fairly easy game to complete, but had many optional paths that players never found. "I tried to make the score in *Larry S* flexible, but many players breezed through the game without trying to replay the game to get higher points," Lowe lamented. *Larry 6* will be better play-balanced for adventurers of all skill levels. The *Laffer Calendar* (or *Oral Organizer*) will be the first talking calendar for the Windows environment and a utility program with many other nifty features like fax



Some of the scenes in Freddy, take on a new...er...perspective

covers, Windows "wallpaper" and *Laffer Dark*, an adult screen saver.

Lowe's biggest challenge with *Larry* in 1993 is to find him a voice. He sees *Larry* as a cross between Bill Murray and Chevy Chase and plans to take his time to find amongst the country's profession-

al actors that one voice that will forever bring *Larry* to life on the computer.

Al Lowe broke new ground when he began work on **Freddy Pharkas**. The game has the right look and feel for a Western, with lots of attractive artwork and a solid soundtrack. Freddy's future depends on the success of this first venture, but there's no worry in the Sierra camp because Lowe is like a kid in a candy store with his new material. **Freddy Pharkas** is just the right game to inspire game companies to forge new trails. Just as *Leisure Suit Larry* and the *Space Quest* games soared, we can dream up success for this title. You'll certainly have no trouble counting sheep after playing this game!

Hi-Ya!

Bam!

Ouch!



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WAY OF THE NINJA

Ninja in Training! It's going to take more than a couple of jumping jacks to prepare for this adventure! After all, no one ever said being a ninja was easy. Learn how to deliver killer blows with your trusty sword and send a barrage of throwing stars at your enemies. Explore dungeon mazes and battle giant rats, toxic worms and super leeches that call these caves home! Snoop on your enemies as you explore the countryside, but watch out for bushwhackers eager to steal your gold. If you train hard and master the ninja arts you may live long enough to exact revenge on the warlord that killed your family. One final word of advice: "Quiet ninjas live longer."



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by Ed Dille

The only way to enjoy a war is through combat simulations. Submarines, ships, tanks and even infantry can be exciting if recreated as games, without the bloodshed.

The quintessential simulation of modern naval warfare to date is **Harpoon**, from 360 Software. **Harpoon II**, slated for release later this year, promises to extend the topic to new heights. **EG** had the unique opportunity to interview the **Harpoon II** design leaders, and our initial impression is that, if 360 succeeds in its vision for **Harpoon II**, nothing on the drawing boards will touch it for years to come.

Sinking Beneath the Waves

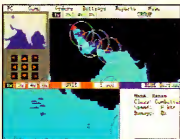
Ever since Microprose released **Silent Service** for Atari and Apple computers, the gaming public has clamored for more of the same.

There's no question that players will delight to the sequel of the original that started it all, **Silent Service II** for the IBM. The program features stunning digitized modeling of Japanese surface combatants and even veteran players of this type of simulation will be challenged repeatedly, particularly if attempting to pursue a campaign for the entire period. The best submarine commanders were a cautious lot who meticulously set up each attack with their escape route already planned out. **Silent Service II** reinforces this lesson over and over until the unreceptive player catches on. It remains the definitive simulation of submarine warfare.

For modern submarine warfare, the best of the lot is Electronic Arts' **688**

Attack Sub, still available for IBM and Amiga after almost four years on the market. It places the player in the role of Commanding Officer for either a Los Angeles class or Soviet Alfa class attack submarine. Although somewhat dated politically, players are treated to some palm-sweating scenarios.

Scenario designs always have hidden elements that increase their play value. As an example, in the Goulash scenario, the player is guarding a group of mer-



The now-famous Harpoon helped pave the way for military sims.

chants from two Soviet surface ships when, suddenly and without warning, a group of Backfire bombers arrives and decimates the merchants. "Dirty Pool," the player screams, knowing that he cannot engage aircraft. Actually it's not, because the Soviet ships needed to be taken out before they radioed the position of the merchants to the air wing.

Wolfpack, available from Broderbund since 1990, provides the definitive approach thus far to coordinated U-Boat warfare during the North Atlantic Convoy campaign. (It is rumored that another major simulations developer is working on a U-boat product called **Seawolves**, but details are scarce.) **Wolfpack** includes 12 pre-designed scenarios and a versatile scenario editor to create campaigns. Missions may be day or night, and specifying the period of the war affects what technology is available.

There are several submarine products that are less desirable, but still available. **Das Boot**, from 360, was an embarrassing product for IBM and Amiga. Seeking to capitalize on the movie license, the product lacked either the tactical challenge or the arcade elements necessary to succeed. It lingers now in the wholesale software market. Equally disappointing were the versions of **Hunt for Red October** (Software Toolworks/IBM and SNES.) Another Tom Clancy license, **Red Storm Rising** (Microprose), fared somewhat better on the

IBM, but purists may be irritated by the amount of damage that can be sustained by friendly submarines before perishing.

Heavy Metal

Tank simulations were all the rage in 1990, and there have been a few entries since that time. Again, some have passed into oblivion, like **Tom Loughry's Steel Thunder**. It was one of the first programs to use bit-mapped vehicle models and was distributed for MS-DOS by Accolade. Alas, poor M-60, I knew you well. Among the survivors are **Abrams Battle Tank** (Electronic Arts for the IBM and Sega Genesis), **Tank** (Spectrum Holobyte for the IBM) and MicroProse's **M-1 Tank Platoon** for the IBM. The newer releases are **Super Battle Tank** (Absolute), for both SNES and Sega Genesis, and Empire's **Team Yankee** (1 & 2) for the IBM. The latter is not worthy of further mention due to being yet another poorly



The Hunt for Red October relives the exciting drama of the movie.

conceived execution of a license popular in another media.

Abrams Battle Tank focuses upon the M-1, and sends players on either single missions or campaigns on the European front. Mission types vary: defend friendly bases against waves of assaulting Soviet armor, destroy critical bridge heads, or rescue downed units behind enemy lines. It is important to note that none of the scenarios reflect actual armored tactics, as single tanks would not be used in this manner, but, given that, the missions are challenging and exciting.

Spectrum Holobyte's **Tank** has the distinction of being the only program of the lot available for Macintosh. The graphics are rather chunky polygon fill and the interface (pull down menus) is difficult to master. One of the best features of the program is modicum support for head to head competition involving either single tanks or entire units. **Super Battle Tank** has a similar look and feel to Spectrum Holobyte's product but it has decidedly

SIMULATING WAR

more arcade-type influence and is focused on the recent War in the Gulf instead of a Soviet conflict.

M-1 Tank Platoon, the MicroProse entry, remains the uncontested winner within this sub genre. The player assumes the role of "guiding spirit" for a platoon of four tanks and sixteen crew members. Each man is rated for skills and has a specific job within the platoon. Losing him in combat means training a green recruit as a replacement. The player has the option of taking tactical command of one of the tanks, issuing orders to other members of the platoon or even taking the role of one of the 16 crew members, as the situation dictates. The program broke new ground at the time of its release in terms of tactical terrain use and its faithfulness to military doctrine without sacrifice of play value. It remains current and imminently playable today as long as, again, one is able to get past the use of Soviet units as the enemy.

Parting Shots

The final category, ground combat simulations, is the smallest of the lot. Nevertheless, it deserves mention for a couple of reasons. First, one of the prod-



Super Battle Tank lets players command the advanced M1 tank.

ucts, **Airborne Ranger** (MicroProse for the IBM) is about to be ported to the SNES. Second, Electronic Arts showed an entirely new product from this subset at the recent CES, **SEAL Team**. Before delving into either of these titles, it is important to first cover a product that fits between this category and that of ship-board simulations, Accolade's **Gunboat**.

Gunboat is available for IBM and Amiga and is yet another Tom Loughry design. The focus of the product is Riverine warfare on the Vietnamese Delta. The player is skipper of a Patrol Boat and must conduct numerous interdiction missions up and down the Delta, from Sampan searches to destruction of weapon's caches.

Airborne Ranger is a 3/4 overhead action arcade game where the player must guide his on-screen character through several levels of enemy defenses. Although simplistic on the IBM, the game should port over nicely to the SNES. Expect availability sometime in the second quarter of 1993.

Electronic Arts' **SEAL Team** was designed as a simulation of Navy SEAL Team actions during the Vietnam conflict. The program is done in first person perspective and places the MS-DOS player in the role of Team leader.

Missions are based on actual combat reports from SEAL Teams of the period, provided by the Naval Archives. The design emphasizes proper SEAL tactics of stealth and concealment where, except when one is setting up an ambush, the last thing desired is contact with the enemy. By emphasizing proper mission planning and strategy over straight firepower, **SEAL Team** will definitely earn the attention and respect of gamers when it becomes available.

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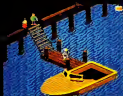
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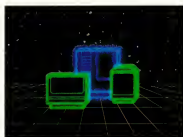
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Shadowrun

Data East

Designed by Beam Software PTY Ltd

SNES

1 Player

After the beginning of man's self-generated mutation through technology, chaos, epidemics and famine transformed the Earth into a corrupt wasteland. Just when everything started looking similar to the latest issue of Newsweek, an event occurred which came to be known as the Awakening. The 3000 year lull in the flow of mystical energies subsided and sorcery returned to the



Visiting a morgue will be just a small part of the adventure of Shadowrun.

world. Elves, Dwarves, Orcs and Trolls assumed their real form and the Horsemen of the Apocalypse rode the land.

Out of anarchy generated by immense social and cultural upheaval, cybertechnology arose from the ashes as the savior of humanity. The old communications network was replaced by a computer grid, known as the Matrix, and traditional government crumbled in the face of the power structure of Mega-Corporations. Such is the world the player enters, through the unfortunate circumstance of waking up in the morgue.

Exploration of the immediate environment will give the player a scalpel and a healing patch, and yield important clues ("Armetidge, J." is on the morgue drawer

and a slip of paper falls out when the player examines it).

The game utilizes a 3/4 top down perspective similar to later *Ultima* installments, which allows the player to view only the room currently occupied and, occasionally, an adjoining area.

Object manipulation is handled by the B button, which brings up an action glove similar to a mouse pointer. The glove can be moved around a room and, if there are any items of interest, their names pop up in a dialogue box. Clicking the B button again allows the player to examine or pick up the object. As in all action adventures, pick up everything that is not nailed down, because it has a use later on. For example, the scalpel found in the first room can be used to pick the locks on the crypt doors in the graveyard, and the player can do a little grave robbing to get some Nuyen (cash). Who says you can't take it with you?

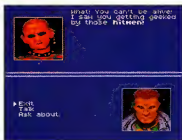
The future is a violent place, and people seem to be taking potshots at the player for no apparent reason. Could all of them be working with the hitmen that waxed Jake to begin with? Unraveling that mystery will take some time, and there are other things that must be done first. It is easy to distinguish important NPCs from everyday folk, who are labeled "Busy man," and it is critical that the player talk to every other NPC that doesn't shoot first. Conversations are initiated with the "talk" option but, as the player progresses, certain specific topics of conversation are added to the "ask about" list. Certain NPCs will also provide different information the second time they are encountered, since the player has found more leads in the interim.

Once Jake has developed some cash flow, it is time to purchase armament to fight back. Combat is controlled with the A button, which brings up a targeting cross hair. Move the cross hair over the offending NPC and press the button again to fire the selected weapon. Combat is real time, not phased, so the play-

er must closely watch the character's stamina bar.

It is also possible to use magic in combat, once the player has developed the skill and found the correct talisman for offensive spells. Magic is controlled by the Spell glove, which is accessed via the X button. Combat does drain resources quickly, so it is important for the player to sleep periodically to restore stamina and save the game. Two save positions are possible.

Another option in the sleep menu is to "spend karma." Karma points are gained through successful combat or profitable journeys into the Matrix and may be spent to increase the character's skills and attributes.



In-depth character interaction is a unique feature that adds enjoyment.

Shadowrun is more sophisticated than standard SNES fare, and will appeal to teenage and older players. It is certain to become widely popular.

—Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	87%
Playability	96%
OVERALL	
94%	

X-Men

Sega
Genesis
1-2 players

Sega chose a great time to produce an X-Men game.

Trace comic books back to the '60s, and one superhero team appears more popular than all the others: the X-Men. The lineup has changed over the years, but the group has always been composed of mutant humans with special powers, led by Professor Xavier. "Professor X," a mutant himself, gathered the X-Men together to make the world safe for their kind.

Recently, they've attained even more popularity with fresh series like X-Force and a second X-Men title, redesigned costumes and color-coded squads of X-Men in a new hierarchy, plus a syndicated cartoon, a 6-player upright arcade game, and other related merchandise.

Until now, X-Men games haven't lived up to the team's heritage, but Sega's Genesis incarnation captures the essence and movements of a few X-Men in a challenging action game.

One of the toughest parts of the design of X-Men must have been the selection of the characters and the enemies.

Fans will find the four most popular X-Men—Wolverine, Cyclops, Gambit and Nightcrawler—and some of their traditional foes: Juggernaut, Sabretooth, Mojo and Deathbird, and their leader, Magneto.

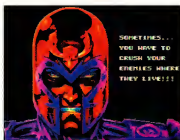
Magneto has devised the world's deadliest computer virus and infected the master computer that controls the X-Men's training area, the Danger Room. Players must escape the dangerous locations that the Danger Room becomes and defeat Magneto's henchmen and other enemies they find along the way.

X-Men is a side-scrolling action game in which players use their choice of mutant's powers and moves to eliminate enemies, activate doors and other machinery, and find their way out of the Danger Room levels. Any of the mutants

can do the job, but some are better than others in certain levels. Gambit is the easiest to control because he carries a stick that puts a safe distance between him and his enemies. Wolverine and Nightcrawler have elongated bodies when they attack, but still aren't as secure as Gambit. Cyclops is the toughest to play; he stands fairly vertical and has a short reach.

Sega gave players direct control of the mutants' powers. Gambit throws explosive playing cards. Wolverine extends his adamantium claws for some serious slashing. He also goes into a berserker rage if he has no mutant power left and his claws are extended. Cyclops wields a powerful optic blast eye-beam. Nightcrawler can teleport through obstacles with an explosion of light (BAMF!—regrettably, Sega did not overlay the word). Players should reserve powers for special enemies and use the normal kicks, punches and lunges for average foes.

Each mutant has two power bars—one for mutant power and one for health. As they take damage, the yellow health bar shrinks. Mutants' limited powers are recorded by the blue meter. When a mutant loses all his health points, he transports back to the control room and



The evil Magneto is at it again! Will the Uncanny X-Men be able to stop him?

power meters get too low. This option will save many gamers from bouts of frustration.

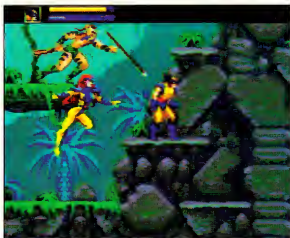
Rather than totally ignore the other X-Men in their game, Sega added five other mutants, in minor roles. In times of need, players can select one of the additional X-Men to assist. Storm conjures a tornado-like wind to literally blow the foes off the screen. Archangel makes three strafing runs, hailing his deadly needles upon the enemy. Rogue pops up and takes some jabs at nearby opponents. Iceman builds an ice bridge across deep chasms. Jean Grey catches X-Men if they fall off a ledge and then returns them to safety.

The levels of X-Men take players from a simulation of the Savage Land, all the way to the space fortress Asteroid M. They visit the Shi'Ar Empire, Ahab's Future World, Mojo's domain and the spooky Excalibur Lighthouse in-between. Strewn throughout are switches and keys to open doors and remove obstacles, as well as the power-ups.

X-Men is a hard game, even on the Amateur difficulty level, due to the high number of enemies and the low number of power-ups. It works much better as a two-player game, and calls to mind Konami's arcade game: two mutants at work on the same screen is as exciting as some comic book battles.

X-Men finally does the popular Marvel Comics superheroes justice in the home gaming world. BAMF away!

—Russ Ceccola

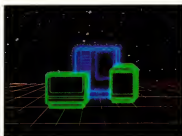


he is "X-ed" out for the rest of the game.

Power-ups that increase health and mutant power are scattered throughout, but there aren't enough for average players to make it through the game. Wolverine is the only mutant who naturally regains power just by standing around; this benefit makes him the mutant of choice in difficult situations.

Instead of starting a level over completely, players can switch mutants a limited number of times on each level if the

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	85%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	
85%	



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

AeroBiz: Global Network

Koei Corporation
SNES

1-4 players

The idea in **AeroBiz** is to build an airline and make it run profitably and continue to grow in stature.

This game, part of Koei's Executive



Series, makes it fairly easy for the budding executive who has, in effect, inherited a small operation and the starting capital to build it up. The player gets to choose a headquarters city from 22 possible locations around the world. As might be guessed, it's easier to start up a successful operation in New York or Tokyo than in Nairobi or Teheran. There are also five levels of play, ranging from beginner to expert.

Four competing airlines, handled by human or computer players, vie to connect all 22 cities through air routes, keep annual profits in the black and reach a target number of passengers per quarter. Of course, it is also important to beat out all the other competitors.

There are two scenarios, each comprising a 32-year period: 1963-1995 or

1983-2015. A turn covers three months, and quarterly reports on sales, expenses, profits and passenger count indicate progress. Annual reports comparing the top three airlines are also automatically screened, and other specific reports are available on the company's holdings and on the operations of competitive lines.

The range of variables with which to simulate such an extensive international business is wide, beginning with the ranks and types of cities connected to the routes, through the variety of planes used, to investments in branch offices, hotels, and charter companies. Negotiations for the connection and development of routes to various cities are touched on, including the opening of slots at the airports, which is handled by managers delegated to take care of the process. Budget allocations must be made for repairs, service and promotion.

Random events affect the business, such as war breaking out between Iran and Iraq, a city scheduled to host a World's Fair, or a plane disaster at one of the airports.

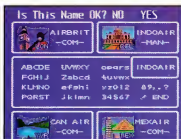
Proper planes and number of flights per week are selected for varying routes, depending on route length, fuel consumption and anticipated passenger traffic.

Plane choices include the Boeing 700 series, McDonnell

Douglas's DC series, Lockheed 1011, the Concorde, the A-300 series from Deutsche Airbus and even some from a couple of manufacturers in the former Soviet Union.

The graphics adequately display what is going on. The managers and the vice president are animated in close-up, mouths moving in an odd-flopping loop sequence as they give their reports. Their words appear on the screen (there is no speech). Newly purchased planes are shown being towed into a hangar. When a city is selected for route establishment, a sketchy overhead view appears along with appropriate data, together with an icon with the airport designation, like LAX for Los Angeles.

The best graphic effect is provided



Picking the name of your own airline is the first step toward a conglomerate!

when a new route is opened. A plane levitates over a topological world map in 3-D perspective, rising from the originating city, crossing the intervening territory or ocean, and dropping on the destination city.

The background music is light, evocative and repetitive. Most major cities have their own themes—frequently with appropriate associations: jazzy in New York, oriental in Beijing or with a mid-eastern twang in Teheran. Mostly, however, the background plays the theme of



As the manager of an airline, you will have to make executive decisions.

the airline's headquarters city, which can get tiring after continued play. Happily, a selection screen lets this be changed, or it may be shut off completely.

AeroBiz is sure to bring out the managerial wizard in each player. It combines strategy and real-life business practices while remaining fun.

— Ross Chamberlain

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	83%
Sound	76%
Playability	88%
OVERALL	
86%	

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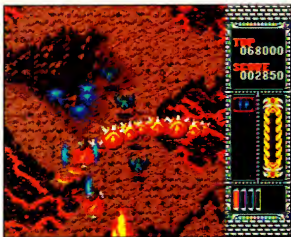
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Elemental Master

Renovation Products
Designed by: Technosoft
Genesis
1 Player

Evil has come to Lorelei, a medieval city once renowned for its cleanliness, peaceful streets and charitable populace. Regrettably, Lorelei became infested with thieves, sorcerers and other undesirables who disrupted the lives of its citizens. The aging king could not lead the defense of his city against the Harvesters of Gyra, a group who make the Sharks and Jets look like Our Gang.

The Harvesters were challenged by a young student named Junos, who sealed the evil beings beneath Lorelei through his mastery over the natural elements: fire, wind, earth and water. Believing Lorelei to be safe, he left to continue his schooling.



Many years later, a nasty sorcerer secretly arrived with a plan to summon the Harvesters of Gyra from their confinement. His scheme succeeded and Lorelei was soon reduced to shambles. When the doomed town received word

that Junos, commander of the elements, had died, the situation looked hopeless.

Against all logic, however, old King Lorelei and his knights defeated the Harvesters and resented them to the dungeon. The town drew a collective sigh of relief and prepared to honor their heroes. But King Lorelei's strongest knight, Laden, believed that the recapture of the Harvesters had been too easy, and that Aryaag, the sorcerer who had helped in the conquest, was not to be trusted.

Laden was, of course, correct. Aryaag soon revealed that not only was he Gyra, but declared that Laden was his brother. Laden refused to believe this and vowed to save the city. The only way to do this, he knew, was to master Junos' power over the elements and become the new Elemental Master.

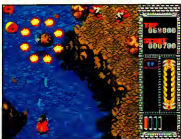
Elemental Master presents four levels of vertically scrolling combat, each keyed to a particular element: In the Fire Zone, the player-character shoots fireball triads; in the Wind Zone, Laden blows away Gyra's minions with streams of wind; the Earth Zone is similar to the Fire Zone, but uses only a single blast of fire to produce the same effect. Within the Water Zone, Laden releases water jets from his hands while spinning water emanates from his sides.

Four power-ups appear in **Elemental Master**: crystals, medicines, magic rocks and mirrors. The crystal surrounds Laden with a protective shield which withstands three hits before dissipating. Mysterious medicines add hit-points which can only be accessed with the aid of the magic rocks, and the mirror presents three images of Laden so that there are actually four player-characters on-screen, all firing the weapon of choice.

Elemental Master is not an easy game to play. There is no learning curve; hence, while the

player can begin on any of four levels, the difficulty level doesn't significantly vary, which may lead to player frustration. The angled top-down perspective permits the player to see both what is

ahead and behind Laden, and using the "A" button on the control pad allows the p-c to turn and fire at enemies sneaking up behind him. Laden also receives assistance from a fairy-type character named Neena, who diverts enemy fire from him and permits him to destroy the villains. A disadvantage in this game is that while the player is given five opportunities to continue, there are no level markers, so the player must start at the beginning of the level each time out. Another down point is the lack of an options screen. There are no opportuni-



A wide variety of special power-ups can be utilized to help Laden battle his foes.

ties to switch command buttons, alter difficulty, change the music, or produce a two-player set-up. The playability of **Elemental Master** is high, however, despite the frustrations.

The game graphics are solid but not spectacular. The opening sequence is impressive and sets the stage for the game that follows. However, the text sinks to near-illegibility when Laden and Gyra exchange words to present an abbreviated version of the story. The game uses blast and smash graphics, which increases the excitement level with every enemy death.

The opening music is appropriately dark and foreboding, and becomes more inspirational as the game begins. While **Elemental Master** has some drawbacks, the game is complex, playable and overall, a good addition to the Genesis library.

—Laurie Yates

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	82%
Sound	83%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	
85%	



Photo: David Laundy/Disney

Something is very wrong at the Zevo Toy Factory.

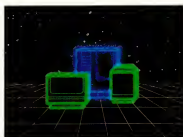
Ever since the evil General Zevo took charge, he's been manufacturing an army of deadly military weapons disguised as toys that threaten to destroy everything in their path and take over the factory forever!

Only the General's nephew, Leslie, can stand up to the power-hungry madman! Armed with hundreds of Good Toys that can hold their own against the toughest of Bad Toys, Leslie enters into war. And with allies like the spring-attack Jack-in-the-Boxes and rapid-fire Peanut Guns, Leslie's ready to take on anything the General can throw at him!

- **Hundreds of Good Toys at your command, each with their own special actions!**
- **Incredible graphics, sound effects, and over 1,000 frames of animation!**
- **Based on the film directed by Academy Award-winner Barry Levinson!**

Designed by David Crane & Alex DeMeo.





VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Bulls vs. Blazers

Electronic Arts
Genesis
1-2 Players

The latest version of EA's professional basketball game, which first saw silicon as **Lakers vs. Celtics**, comes to the Sega system in championship form. Well-animated, nicely drawn characters move up and down court in response to a simple interface that leaves room for frills like instant replay.

Besides the play-off clubs, video gamers can select the East or West all-star teams. It's also possible to assemble a fully customized team.

Bulls vs. Blazers can be played as individual, isolated games or as part of the playoff. (In the latter case, a huge tournament board makes it easy to monitor the step-by-step climb to the championship. A password system permits gamers to save a tournament-in-progress for later completion.)

You can play solitaire in either a single game or tourney, but head-to-head is available only outside the playoff structure. As partial compensation, two gamers can join forces in the attempt to propel a team to the pinnacle of basketball supremacy in the playoffs.

Tastes in hoops differ, so **Bulls vs. Blazers** has both arcade and simulation modes. The former is a streamlined ver-



Players can choose from many popular NBA teams. It's three-peat time!



sion of the game, ideal for those who want pure court action. The simulation enlarges the game to include player fatigue and the danger of fouling out. This forces coaches to juggle the lineup so that guys like Michael Jordan are rested and ready for crunch time.

Other options set the calibre of players at any of three levels, adjust the length of a quarter, and control music and sound. In addition, each team sets general defense strategy, which can be altered during the game to adjust to the other squad's offense.

A star on the hard wood identifies the athlete under direct control. The direction disk moves that player around as desired.

Because the passing system is so easy to use, **Bulls vs. Blazers** doesn't degenerate into an endless series of full-court one-player rushes. It makes the contest feel more realistic while subtly encouraging more varied game situations.

To shovel the ball to a teammate, hold down the B button and use the direction disk to cycle through the other players on the floor. Hitting B again sends the ball to the intended destination.

Holding down the A or C button initiates a shot. What kind depends on the ballhandler's location and movement at the time of the attempt.

On defense, pushing the appropriate button makes the player jump to block a shot, immediately transfers control to the defender nearest the basket, or goes for a steal. Used in combination with the defensive strategy screen, this gives a lot more emphasis on defense than some older basketball titles.

The Star button gives access to instant replay, the defensive settings, and statistics. Coaches can check sea-

son and current game stats for all of their men at any point.

The angled side perspective play-field scrolls smoothly to follow the action. The players are large with a lot of animation. The artificial intelligence may not be optimal, though, because there's a tendency for men not under direct player control to clump up. Sometimes, the

action looks wrong as little knots of players butt up against each other for no particular reason.

Referees do their part in the game. All of the actual fouls that are issued during a regular NBA game are replicated on the game screen. The ref will be seen making the call, and the appropriate penalty (ball possession, shooting foul, etc.) will be assessed to the offending team.



The new Instant Replay option allows gamers to study those incredible shots.

Bulls vs. Blazers is an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, basketball cartridge. It's an action-packed game with plenty of opportunities to apply the principles of basketball strategy.

- Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	86%
Sound	91%
Playability	91%
OVERALL	
90%	

Doomsday Warrior

Renovation
SNES
1-2 players

The popularity of fighting games insures that game companies will continue to turn out contests of this type until the bottom drops out and arcade-goers and home gamers find some other fad to latch onto. Until that happens, we can expect more products like **Doomsday Warrior**, but it's doubtful that any of them will have the flexibility and variety of Renovation's new SNES title.

This seven-character fighting game

so that players will not tire of experimentation too soon.

The most striking aspects of the Doom Squad warriors are the fluidity of their movements and their speed. Each warrior responds to the controller quickly, so it's up to the player to master the movements and use them well. The animation is quite nice, particularly for Amon the Heavy Metal King, P-Lump the Fat Bomber and Nuform the Living Liquid. Grimrock the Dikken Lizard is the easiest character to use and the toughest to beat because he can easily stay at a distance and use his long tail as a capable weapon.

Fighting game fans will be able to



Doomsday Warrior lets the player fight with new characters and moves.

advantage in battles. Certain moves work better against specific opponents, so strategy creeps into the contests for experienced players.

A unique aspect of **Doomsday Warrior** is the buildup of specific features of the fighters. After each battle, victors can add bonus points to their arm power, leg power, defense power, soul power or vitality (hit points). Soul power is the ability to quickly recover vitality. Players can add these bonus points, then save the character, and later see the specific effects in battle. This customization of the warriors enlivens the game.

The best reasons for gamers to try single-player mode are to gain combat experience and to watch the computer opponent's moves. The game wouldn't take that long to finish otherwise.

The sound effects and music take a back seat to the graphics throughout most of the game, but **Doomsday Warrior** shows off all its bells and whistles during the execution of the secret moves.

The graphics are nice in all the scenery and cinematic screens, especially the backgrounds. The scenes pop up randomly so that each battle and game could potentially have a different feel, even with the same characters. This makes for a decent replay value.

Doomsday Warrior is a good game, but only recommended for the die-hard fighting game fans with buddies anxious to beat them.

—Russ Ceccola



emphasizes the two-player aspects of the product. It also provides the ability to modify a character's attributes and save them to the cartridge.

Doomsday Warrior, like many other video games, has a tenuous plot. An enchantress named Main from the planet Dikken came to Earth to train a seven-member Doom Squad for military uses. Later she realized that she needed to change her approach, and singled out a traitor from the Doom Squad. The player's character is the traitor and this character must successfully defeat the six other Doom Squad members, Main's assistant Ashura, and Main herself. In two-player games, the opponent takes the role of the Doom Squad loyalists.

The seven members of the Doom Squad are quite a collection of talent. Each has distinct looks and movements

familiarize themselves with **Doomsday Warrior** rather quickly. There are two difficulty levels and a number of normal combat maneuvers, but the best moves are undocumented. Learning each character's secret moves gives the player an



Players can choose from several intense characters before the battle begins.

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	80%
Sound	80%
Playability	80%
OVERALL	
80%	

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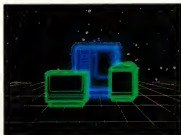
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**SEGA
GENESIS**

**FLYING
EDGE**

SEGA



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

NBA All-Star Challenge

Flying Edge
Genesis
1-2 Players

Amidst all the team-oriented basketball games scuffling up the electronic courts these days, **NBA All-Star Challenge** comes as a refreshing change of pace. Rather than forcing the gamer to control an entire team of rampaging roundballers, this game reproduces basketball's most popular two-player half-court variations, from classic one-on-one to HORSE.

All-Star Challenge uses the same half-court display on all five of its modules: a camera at center court set approximately at eye level with the backboard. This perspective was pioneered in the first great electronic basketball simulation: **Dr. J and Larry Bird Go One-on-One** (Electronic Arts), and this Flying Edge entry learned well from that groundbreaking program.



One of the many exciting contests is the long-range 3 Point Shootout.

Players select from among five different contests: One-on-One, Free Throw Competition, 3 Point Shootout, HORSE, and a One-on-One Tournament. Next, a lineup of available teams appears on-screen, with each squad represented by its top player, whether it's Michael Jordan from the Bulls or Patrick Ewing of the Knicks. One superstar is chosen to represent the player and a second is

selected by either the computer or a human opponent.

In One-on-One, the player with the ball is positioned outside the three-point line while his opponent guards him. The object is simple: get the ball into the net, either by driving toward the backboard or getting free and launching a long shot. The game uses modified play-ground rules:

fouls are called, but there are no free throws; the ball is simply turned over.

The free throw contest pits two competitors against one another in an attempt to sink the most baskets from the free throw line, while in the 3 Point Shootout, they compete to launch successful, long range bombs. Three Point shooting is reproduced entirely through the timing of action button commands, and it is definitely one of the toughest challenges around, requiring absolute precision shooting.

Probably the most exciting mini-contest is HORSE, the ultimate play-ground challenge. One player attempts a shot from anywhere on the halfcourt. If it goes swish, then the second player must duplicate it. If a player fails to match a successful shot, one of five points (each represented by a letter from the word h-o-r-s-e) is deducted. When a player spells out the dreaded word, they lose. Now if the first player attempts a shot and misses, the ball is handed over to his opponent, who now gets to set the pace.

The final game is **NBA All-Star Challenge** is a One-on-One Tournament which lets the player run through every available NBA superstar—in a single elimination tournament.

This is a tough game, sometimes artificially so. In the free throw competition, for example, the basket seems to have about as much depth as a cigar box. It often feels as if nothing but a perfect shot will ever make it through the twine. The interface for free throws also leaves something to be desired. An on-screen targeting device rolls randomly around the net area. The player must wait for the instant at which the marker passes directly over the net, then hit the action



button. The 3-Point contest is harder, but because it feels more realistic, it is less frustrating.

Certainly, there is no lack of team basketball simulations, but it's nice to be able to experience the distinctive thrill of play-ground roundball with the presence of NBA pros. The simulated NBAers are not perfect computer recreations, but they



How would your favorite NBA players fare in a friendly game of HORSE?

do manifest the particular strengths and weaknesses of the players they are intended to represent. The solid graphics and smooth animations enhance the game's sense of realism. Put your favorite pros to the test!

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	81%
Playability	84%
OVERALL	
85%	

Taz-Mania

Sunsoft
SNES
1 Player

If you love those great old Warner Brothers cartoons, then Sunsoft has a game for you. **Taz-Mania** has the frantic feel of an old cartoon featuring what may be their most popular character (I apologize to the duck and the rabbit fans).

The main thrust of the game is a fast-moving chase down the dangerous roads of the Australian outback, as our hero, Taz, seeks out and consumes the very mobile and small Kiwi bird.

Taz is, of course, able to go into his trademark tomado mode if he so desires. However, this does tend to eat up his life energy.

What chance does that tiny, helpless, little Kiwi bird have when faced with the ravenous hunger of Taz?

Well, actually, a pretty good chance. If you are a stumblebum game player like myself, you will plow into trees, traffic lights, cars (driven by the absolute worst drivers ever), lakes, rocks, cacti, a bus or two and prickly little bushes. There is also a crummy little kid shooting arrows at you from the side of the road (a literal pain in the neck). And in addition to this, there is this really rotten pterodactyl who will fly in, grab Taz, and dump him all the way back at the beginning.

Okay, now you're feeling sorry for Taz. Don't worry. There are ways to compensate for all these awful things.

Along the way there are little blue and red birds who like nothing better than to come down and fly around Taz. He should eat 'em immediately. The blue



Many obstacles must be avoided or Taz will end up as useless mass of road kill!

a motor scooter who proudly holds up his sign from the ACME Company. This guy will either help or hinder at any time. Whack or grab at him and he'll toss Taz a bone, a steak, a roast (all of which energize Taz) or a stick of dynamite (which blows him up "real good"). This happy little fellow will stay around for awhile, so it's probably a good idea to grab at him. Otherwise, he gets in the way of seeing that tree Taz is about to slam into or that Kiwi running along up ahead.

Taz-Mania is a fun game. It has that Looney Tunes feel all over. The graphics are colorful and reminiscent of the old cartoon look.

The animation on this game is very well done. When Taz gets bashed or smashed, he goes through a series of old takes until he shakes it off to resume his hunt. Taz has a wide variety of views and the usual facial characteristics that one should expect. After I got bashed about a million times, that Kiwi bird would walk through or around Taz as he recovered. The timing was perfect.

When the ACME dingo is done with his work, he abruptly trolleys off into the distance. The effect is hilarious, and helps to accent this light-hearted game.

The classic animators knew that timing, strong characters, and a few good jokes were what was needed to make a good cartoon. The people at Sunsoft have tried and succeeded in recreating that fun, old cartoon feel.

— Frank Kurtz



Taz, everyone's favorite devil, must use his speed and agility in this new title.

birds will revitalize Taz's strength, and the red birds will add ten seconds to his allotted time to eat Kiwi birds. Don't let them distract Taz too much, because that cute little Kiwi can run by at any moment. Also, on the way is a dingo on

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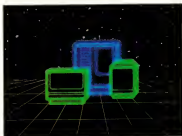
DTL SOFTWARE
Dept. G5

352 W. Bedford Ave., Suite 104

RATING

Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	81%
Playability	92%

OVERALL
84%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Splatterhouse 3

Namco
SNES
1 Player

They say the third time is a charm, and while that may be true for some games (Contra III, Castlevania III) and not for others (Bonk 3, Double Dragon 3), Splatterhouse 3 falls into the former category. In fact, Namco has gone all-out for the third installment of this grisly series with a 16-Meg masterpiece of blood and mayhem definitely not for the faint of heart.

One of the first noticeable aspects of this cart is the game play. Where the second installment left much to be desired in terms of player control (the sloppy jumps, the awkward way villains bounced off Rick's punches) the third one, if anything, shows how player control should be done—it is flawless.

The excellent control really shows off with the several new moves Rick can do as well. There are the traditional punches and kicks, but there are also devastating head butts, throws, jump kicks, roundhouses, and hold moves Rick can perform on the army of darkness arrayed against him.

The story picks up years after Splatterhouse 2. Rick has put the mask on the shelf, settled down with his love Jennifer and even had a son, David. But, of course, his family is nabbed into the Splatterhouse and Rick dusts off the mask, puts on the tanktop, and ventures back inside for the splat of a lifetime.

Game play is different this time: instead of taking place over a large area, action is confined to a single house. However, there are several rooms Rick can enter whenever he wants, giving the player more control over the game. There is also a map of each floor that can be accessed by pressing START. However, the player must clean out the room he is in of all monsters, otherwise the game just pauses. The flickering mask on the map shows the location; the large red "X" shows the boss character's location.

Gone, however, are the silly screens before each level from the second installment (such as, "The stench of this foul river is overpowering. I must continue upstream").



Horrifying cinemas like this keep the player up to date on family members.

On each floor of the house there are a variety of monsters that become tougher and more disgusting as the game progresses. Some are mild annoyances that jab Rick and exist only to be splatted; others, however, can deprive Rick of a full life bar with one blow. Instead of hearts to show Rick's energy status, there is one long red life bar that can be recharged by grabbing the beating hearts on the floor or left behind by deceased monsters. There is also a blue POW meter: This shows Rick's "special" or "charged" status. This is the game's masterstroke: If there is any energy in this bar and one presses the change button, Rick becomes a muscle-bound destroyer. In this state, his blows do more damage, and he has a special move where several small limbs protrude from his body in a good-sized radius, hurting anything they connect with! However, every time this is used, the POW meter goes down quite a bit. When the meter runs dry, or all the monsters in the room Rick is in are destroyed, it's back to normal Rick.

But how does the game splat? Splatterhouse 3 is the goriest and meanest entry in the series. Most monsters get more gross and bloody with each blow Rick delivers on them. The monsters are also uniquely disgusting: some are new faces such as huge toothed killers that are 85% mouth and 15% body; some are from the previous game, but are very rare (and probably the toughest monsters to kill in the game). There are also a wider variety of weapons available this time—and you can keep them to fight the boss characters! These include a pipe, for a good smasher with reach; a board, a baseball bat, a meat cleaver, a brick,

and a long knife that takes off heads with one slash! However, if Rick is hit while holding a weapon, he will drop it on the ground and it must be picked up before a ghost comes by and takes it away. If it is whisked away, don't fret—it goes to a room on the floor where all the weapons are taken, and it can be reclaimed there. However, this becomes something of a problem when fighting bosses, for Rick must kill them before he can leave the room.

As mentioned earlier, there are boss characters on each floor. The game is designed so the player must complete each floor in the time given or something terrible will happen to a loved family member (a giant worm that eats Jennifer from the inside-out, little David about to be sacrificed to evil forces, etc.) This results in several endings to the game (i.e.: Jennifer dead, but David alive, vice-versa, etc.). The boss characters, obviously, are tougher than the other monsters, and all of them are in two forms: the first is the usual boss, then after several hits usually its head falls off and there is a more disgusting killer underneath. Even the most innocent items are deadly, such as the third boss which is a cute teddy bear—or so it seems! Danger



As superpowered Rick one can do some special moves. Use them sparingly!

lurks around every corner in this game.

The game is a blast to play and could probably only be released on the Genesis. A censored version of this game on the SNES would be unthinkable, but nonetheless probable.

—Mike Weigand

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	93%
Sound	93%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	
91%	

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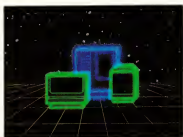
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Jungle Strike

Electronic Arts

Genesis

1 Player

The madman defeated in **Desert Strike** is dead and gone, but his legacy lives on through his son. This would-be conqueror has a potent ally in a South American drug lord, and he's hell-bent on revenge.



A potent threat like this calls for high-powered weaponry. Not only do your forces have a Super Comanche helicopter instead of the more primitive Apache, but **Jungle Strike** includes new vehicles: motorcycles, attack hovercraft and stealth fighters.

The game is structured as a campaign of 10 missions. The first nine involve things like recapturing stolen nuclear weapons and rescuing hostages. Only when these are completed does your force learn the location of the latest enemy of world freedom and his criminal cohorts.

The angled overhead perspective playfield is well-drawn, though the style may be a shade too cartoon-like. More com-

plex animations, with a greater frame rate, make the scrolling smoother and movement faster. This also improves the presentation of explosions, which is always important in this kind of shooter. They look marvelous.

Controlling the helicopter is never easy, especially if the momentum feature is engaged, but the command system is as streamlined as it gets. The chopper takes off automatically and maintains an appropriate altitude.

A pre-game setting configures the direction control. Both choices work equally well, so it becomes a question of personal taste.

With the from-the-cockpit orientation, pushing the controller up or down moves the craft forward or back, while a left or right press rotates it clockwise or counter-clockwise.

The overhead orientation ties direction controls to what's on the screen. Pressing the disk always moves the helicopter in the corresponding direction, relative to the playfield edges.

The buttons fire three different weapons. The supply of missiles is especially limited, so pilots must use restraint when taking out targets. It's important to conserve the heavy armament for the hardest targets.

The Start button accesses strategic aspects of the game.

These are the campaign map, the mission brief-

ing, and the mission summary screen.

The briefing is one of the most



The capital city is under a terrorist attack! Fly the Apache and stop them.

thorough in video gaming. There is a detailed description of each potential target. That's a big plus for gamers who hate to pore over the documentation for hints on how to defeat enemies.



The Hellfire missile will make quick work of the pesky armored vehicles.

The prime question about any sequel is how much new stuff it contains.

Jungle Strike elaborates on the basic theme of **Desert Strike** with lots of new foes and weapons.

The animations are more complex than in the first cartridge. The machine-controlled forces employ more sophisticated tactics and, since some can now move and shoot at the same time, are often harder to hit.

Like its predecessor, **Jungle Strike** helps fill the need for military video games that are not just endless shooting sprees, but which have more action and playability than the hex grid war games which are still a computer software staple. And though it is very fast-paced, **Jungle Strike** balances mental and physical challenge so well that older players won't feel it's beyond their hand-eye coordination.

Jungle Strike promises a good gaming experience, whether you play one mission or sign up for the whole gauntlet. It's a guaranteed winner for those who loved the first game, and it's worth a test-fly for anyone who likes action combat carts with a strategic component. Besides, someone has to try and save the government!

—Arnie Katz

RATING

Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	84%
Playability	92%

OVERALL

90%

Top Game, Bonus Price

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The 3-D Space Combat Simulator



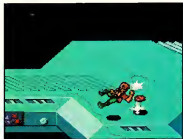
VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Battletoads and Double Dragon: The Ultimate Team

Tradewest
NES
1 or 2 players

For those of you who can't wait until **Super Battletoads** is released for SNES, this latest installment of the "toad saga" will be more than enough to tide you over. This time, the green battling bunch has teamed up with the Double Dragon street fighting team of Billy and Jimmy Lee. The story? The Dark Queen is at it again, this time with a giant laser beam that is training its sights on earth. The Battletoads, Rash, Zitz, and Pimple (the player can utilize Pimple this time - he isn't being rescued), naturally take it upon themselves to save the day. But the Double Dragons want some action, too, so the "Toads pick them up and it's off to the stars to stop the menacing laser. Also teaming up, however, are the villains: the Dark Queen has assembled Toad and Dragon foes alike: Blag, Roper, Ababo, Robo Manus, the Shadow Boss, and the Dragon Queen herself! These characters appear at the end of each level and become more challenging as the game progresses.

The player has several options: he or she can play alone as a Battletoad or



The Double Dragon characters show some bad guys how to hit (and be hit).

Double Dragon, or there is a two-player mode where one can play as a Battletoad, the other a Double Dragon, both as Battletoads, or both as Double Dragons. There are also additional two-player modes: one allows the two to be able to beat each other up, the other makes them immune to the other's blows.

The duo and trio each has their special fighting methods. The Battletoads have their small-appendages-become-big-appendages moves; the Double Dragons have their more traditional street brawling kicks and punches.

The action begins on the wing of the spacecraft, and the player has to fight his way inside. Each level is divided into sub-levels and there is a small map that precedes each level showing where the gamer has to go. A new move has been added: one can crawl along the side of the wing (or other areas in other levels) and kick off any enemies that come inching along. Beware, though; if the player is hanging on the side, enemies standing on the wing will step on his fingers and make him fall off, thus losing a life.

The next two stages take place inside the ship where things become trickier; not only must the player fight, but he must ride speeder bikes (fighting while riding), climb, jump and use the turbo rope to descend into dark and dangerous tunnels and cross large, terrifying chasms. At the end of the third stage, a space pod picks up the character, and the game becomes a shooter in the vein as **Asteroids!** Here, the player must destroy a series of projectiles and other menaces and then square-off against the mother ship, which must be destroyed piece by piece. Never let it be said that this game lacks variety.

One of the best things about the Battletoad series is its remarkable sense of humor: It becomes quite funny watching the way the toads run around smashing enemies with smiles on their faces, and blinking lovingly when they are standing still. Their moves are also hilarious, and this time there is more to laugh at: for instance, the ability to smash enemies through the floor one punch at a time, and then watch them drop through the floor below. Or, the new move that can be executed with the walker's leg when used as a weapon: the enemy is scooped up in the air, then hit for a home run across the screen! The Dragon move is similar: the enemy is pounded through the floor with a pile-driver move. Dragon foe Linda Lash also appears and the Battletoads prove they are not gentlemen: Linda is grabbed by the hair, given a boot to the fanny, then smashed



Study with the Battletoads book of ethics: Dealing with Linda Lash 101.

overhead on the ground twice. As the later levels are reached, things become more intense, especially on the fifth level where the fighting really gets fast and furious, with oversized appendages everywhere.

Like **Battletoads** for NES, **Battletoads and Double Dragon** is also a tough game, with some techniques that take much practice to master. But some aspects have been modified as well (like the Speeder Bike scene—if the player falls off the bike or rams something, he will not have to start the level over). The game play and control are excellent, with familiar control pad movements for both the Toads and the Dragons. The graphics are also excellent—in fact, improved over the first outing. There are multiple scrolling and parallax effects, especially during the Speeder Bike stage (check out the way the fence passes by after the player jumps it). At times, it is hard to believe this is an 8-Bit game!

For the NES system, this game is one of the best, considering the 8-Bit system seems to be living its last days! However, the game still rates high in perspective to all systems because it is extremely fun and challenging to play, especially with two people. So, until Battletoads is released to 16-Bit systems, this should tide fans over. The incredibly quick game play, interesting graphics, and new moves will keep them busy for quite a while. In fact, after playing this cart, some may not bother with the 16-Bit version at all!

—Mike Weigand

RATING

Complexity	Average
Graphics	92%
Sound	90%
Playability	92%

OVERALL
91%



IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT MARIO

**MARIO'S NEWEST ADVENTURE IS
COMING SOON ON SUPER NES**



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SOFTWARE GALLERY

ATAC

MicroProse Software Inc.
Designed by: Argonaut Software
MS-DOS
1 Player

MicroProse's **ATAC** (Advanced Tactical Air Command) has not received the same wide attention as the company's other popular flight sims. Perhaps the game's subtitle, *The Secret War Against Drugs*, is daunting, but reason notwithstanding, **ATAC** is a game with solid roots not only in Prose's own **F-117** and **Strike Eagle** series, but the aging classic **Carrier Command** as well. Designed by Argonaut (*Birds of Prey*) Software, **ATAC** is another one of those action/strategy hybrids that seem to be multiplying faster than a hold full of tribbles. What makes **ATAC** stand out is the way it blends furious air combat with an easy-to-manage strategy system.

The year is 2003 and the Colombian Drug Barons are still reaping billions of dollars in profit from their illicit operations. The Commander of the elite ATAC force has at his disposal eight F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighters, eight AH-64A

evil drug barons. These mercenaries have the latest in offensive Soviet hardware, including Mig-29s and Hind gunships.

ATAC headquarters is a secret jungle base from which all operations are launched. Using intelligence reports from agents (who must be kept happy and resupplied) and reconnaissance information, the player must decide which targets to attack and select the appropriate aircraft. There are no preset missions so the wise commander will always strike where he can do the most damage. Destroying a shipment of processed cocaine will wreak more havoc than wasting a load of freshly harvested coca leaves. Care must also be taken not to harm civilians.

Mission planning requires coordinating the intelligence reports, assigning pilots, selecting and arming aircraft and editing waypoints. It sounds like a lot of work, but the base layout is efficient and moving between areas is relatively painless. Once all of the logistical stuff is done it's time to get in the air and get busy.

All aircraft fly on autopilot but the player can assume control at any time. He may also jump into each aircraft and simply watch as its pilot carries out his mission. Aircraft assigned as wingmen tackle any threats to the leader but will not attack the assigned target unless taken over by the player. When the objectives are achieved, all aircraft return to base and land one by one, taxiing back to the ramp. Watching a flight of F-22s and a

flight of Apaches return simultaneously is a very pretty thing. Rescue missions for downed pilots should be launched immediately—if the drug barons capture them, they're out for the rest of the campaign



and there are no replacements.

Flight simulation is very smooth in the F-22 but, unlike **Gunship 2000**, the Apache handles like a cow. There's also good news and bad news for Thrustmaster users—the FCS (joystick) is supported with multiple functions, but the WCS (throttle) is useless. Back to the keyboard, guys. **ATAC** is good-looking, entertaining and easy to use, and it provides a South American vacation, with pay.

—Scott Wolf



ATAC issues a difficult challenge. Can you help defeat the Colombian cartels?

Apache helicopters and eight of the best pilots money can buy—no, make that eight of the best pilots willing to work for a government paycheck. The best pilots money can buy are employed by the four

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	85%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	
86%	

Alone In The Dark

► Motion, dist. by Interplay
Designed by: Frederick Raynal
MS-DOS
1 Player

In August of 1924, the brilliant but tormented artist Jeremy Hartwood allegedly took his own life. In the days preceding his demise, his obsession with the supernatural had him convinced that a very real and evil presence dwelt within the walls of Derceto, his family's Louisiana mansion.

While the rest of the gaming world is awaiting the release of **The 7th Guest**, Virgin's spectacular CD-ROM haunted house adventure, **Alone in the Dark** has already set a new standard in graphic presentation without the luxury of CD-ROM technology (and its unfortunate by-product, dreadful overacting by digitized live performers). Instead, **Alone in the Dark** pushes polygon-based animation to a whole new level and does it full screen, not in some tiny 'action window.' The 256-color VGA display actually reveals more texture and depth at its low detail setting than most other games can offer at their highest.

The player enters the house as either Edward Camby, a private detective charged with taking inventory of

Derceto's valuable items, or as Emily Hartwood, Jeremy's niece, who has unsettling doubts about the cause of her uncle's death. The gender differences are apparent in both costume and movement. For example, where Camby carries a rifle effortlessly, Emily hefts the firearm onto her shoulder.

The characters appear on screen as complex, three dimensional forms that move realistically through the mansion. In addition to the usual beds and baths, Derceto harbors a subterranean cavern system beneath a house that Lovecraft would call home.



Help Edward Camby defeat the evil beings let loose in the horrifying home.



Although the game is relatively small (about 40 major locations), the imaginative use of two to five cameras in most rooms not only makes it seem larger, but conveys a very real sense of actually being there. **Alone** completely abandons the conventional room-as-a-flat-backdrop style in favor of a more directorial approach in which the views are sometimes dramatic in the extreme. As the player crosses a room the perspective may start from a high corner of the ceiling, switch to floor-level at the opposite end of the room, and then shift outside to reveal some lurking horror watching through a window.

It's quite creepy. Imagine walking into a room and finding a translucent ghost seated silently in a chair, seemingly unaware of your presence until you disturb it. Unlike **7th Guest**, where the hammy apparitions seem to babble incessantly, the creatures in **Alone** are

barely able to emit more than a ghastly moan. This is not to say that **Alone** is lacking in the sound department. Both music and sound effects are crisp and elaborate. The characters' footsteps creak and echo over a variety of surfaces; the rifle roars, followed by a wicked "sha-chack" as another cartridge racks in; Edward and Emily groan in pain with each monster-induced wound (although Emily sometimes sounds as though she were rather enjoying it).

Only seven keys are necessary to play—the cursor arrows,

Return, Space and Escape—and while using the action and inventory options is sometimes clumsy, it's rarely fatal. The puzzles are all perfectly logical and the save and restore functions feature miniature screen shots of the saved positions.

Although it's perfect for computer adventurers, the ultimate testimony to the wonder of this game is that even those who dislike that genre will love **Alone in the Dark**.

—Scott Wolf



Interesting camera angles add to the great realism and create spooky views.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	96%
Sound	96%
Playability	96%
OVERALL	
98%	



SOFTWARE GALLERY

Caesar

Impressions

Designed by: David Lester,
Simon Bradbury, Chris Bamford
MS-DOS
1 Player

The history of the Roman Empire is continually studied and examined by many scholars. It was, without a doubt, one of the most powerful and influential powers in the history of the world. However, as with all empires, it eventually fell. Why did this happen? Because of over-extension? Corruption? In **Caesar**, you get the chance to work your way into the role of Emperor, and see if your decision can make the dynasty last as long as the real empire.

On the surface, **Caesar** is in the same vein as **SimCity** and other city/product expansion games. The main objective in the scenario is to expand your province (graciously handed to you by the Emperor himself) as far as possible, creating new cities, towns and cultural centers along the way. If you are successful, you will eventually receive promotions that may find you ruling the entire empire!

However, this cannot be achieved overnight. The complexity of **Caesar** is truly incredible. Using the mouse-driven icons, you must command all the action on two levels: Provincial and City. As the game begins, you are shown which

Roman province you've received, and you immediately set to the task of building your empire.

The first thing the player notices when indulging in **Caesar** is the complete command that he or she has over the outcome of the game. Depending on the player's style, they might wish to concentrate on creating a peaceful and secure capital city, while others may want to immediately dive into creating many smaller cities, and promoting intensive trade routes. The choice is left to the individual. However, the first step in the game is to construct a thriving capital city. After reviewing the area of the province, the player will play military commander for a few minutes. This involves sending a cohort of Roman soldiers on a patrol route around the province to ward off barbarian attacks. This maneuver is, like all instructive moves in the game, achieved by left-clicking with the mouse on the appropriate icon. All menus and construction commands are utilized through the use of the mouse—even the game save and restore features are totally mouse-driven. This can sometimes prove irritating, as the player has no way to use the keyboard when typing disk commands. The mouse control also brings in a few problems when actually building the cities. Every item that the player uses to construct cities (homes, Roman baths, theatres, roads, fountains, walls, forums, etc.) can be placed only by clicking on the icon, dragging the item to the appropriate area on the screen, and releasing the button. While this is relatively simple for most of the construction, it can be quite hard when trying to create a simple, straight road or wall. The mouse control tends to be very sensitive and the player will often have to recreate a road system, after constructing what looks like a mess of tangled string on the screen. The lack of some sort of an "undo" command creates some unnecessary hassles.

However, this is a minor grievance when viewing the game as a whole.



**Behold, a city thriving under your hand!
Can you expand your empire as well?**

Unlike the **SimCity**-type games, **Caesar** commands much more attention to detail and advanced planning. This is not just a city that is trying to survive—it is an entire culture. The player must take the population (as well as the industry and military strength) of his province into consideration with each decision he makes. For example, if the city begins to grow but

has run out of an ample workforce, should the player simply raise taxes for more income, or spend additional money on constructing homes? And, if the six members of the Forum give conflicting advice, who should be answered first, and to what degree? With **Caesar**, players can enjoy a complex, yet exciting and intuitive game. How hard is it to be an Emperor? Just try it.

—Tim Ostermiller



Caesar gives players the opportunity to try their hand at creating a dynasty.

RATING	
Complexity	Difficult
Graphics	87%
Sound	75%
Playability	88%
OVERALL	
83%	



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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Cobra Mission

Megatech
MS-DOS
Designed by: Erwin Mab
1 Player

Cobra Mission is one of few attempts by any mainstream software publisher to produce a truly adult-themed game. While the level of explicitness properly warrants the self imposed R-rating decreed by Megatech, the material is actually no more candid than *National Lampoon*. The manual accompanying the game describes a debate between the programmers and the marketing department concerning the legal aspects of how much nudity to show. Apparently, marketing won out, because Megatech settled on topless nudity only.

The anxiety that the industry experiences as it antagonizes over this topic is amusing. Comic book retailers commonly distribute an animated periodical based on the adult classic *Debbie Does Dallas* to an appropriately aged audience. If



Many people can provide clues and information during the entire mission.

ever there was a venue into which children venture, a comic book store is it. Yet, judicious dissemination of this material by the retailer prevents acquisition by underage readers. Why would similar controls in video game and computer software outlets be so difficult? If it is the intention of game software

houses to offer this genre of entertainment to adult players, publishers should overcome this peek-a-boo paranoia about their products.

Despite the diluted depictions, **Cobra Mission** still delivers reasonable gameplay. Behind the overt gratuitous sexual content lies a mystery to solve and bad guys to beat up.

The player assumes the identity of J.R. Knight. J.R. departed the sleepy island hamlet of Cobra after high school to attend college somewhere in Florida. Matriculation from his alma mater never quite materialized, and J.R. ended up as a Private Dick instead.

When a distress call comes from Faythe, a former high school sweetheart, J.R. returns to Cobra. Thus begins the adventure of J.R. and his Faythe-ful (groan) companion.

Gameplay occurs in two formats. Most of it takes place in an overhead perspective without much greater clarity than existed in

Phantasy Star.

Gamers will notice a definite distortion as characters pass over the background tiling.

Less frequent, but more appealing graphics occur in the first person perspective. Here, the artwork of **Cobra Mission** is quintessential Japanimation with *Speed Racer* style graphics. (Readers who don't remember *Speed Racer* are probably too young to play **Cobra Mission**.) This mode contains some limited animation, but consists primarily of fixed illustrations.

The audio left somewhat more to be desired. Internal speaker sound was practically nonexistent. On the Sound-Blaster, while the technical quality of the instrumentation was adequate, the compositions themselves were unimpressive. The one remarkable feature was the X-rated sound effects. The intermittent sounds of ecstasy that appear during the romantic sequences add a dimension of hilarity to the event.

The game includes silly dialogue with that distinct flavor always found in Japanese to American translations. The player can customize character names, but even after doing so, occasionally **Cobra Mission** still refers to J.R. or Faythe.



Cobra Mission features an involved plot with plenty of exciting fight sequences.

The combat system provides a new twist by combining a statistically based combat resolution system with a real time response component.

Players that are hard pressed to find **Cobra Mission** at local outlets may order by calling 1 (800) 258-MEGA.

Even though the game is admittedly littered with minor flaws, hopefully Mega-



tech will leverage from this initial effort and eventually produce a line of substantial adult entertainment software. Until then, **Cobra Mission** provides a good play, with definitely interesting visuals that will keep the majority of gamers gazing at the computer screen.

-David Pokorny

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	87%
Sound	79%
Playability	87%
OVERALL	
86%	

You stumbled back to your office after a long day of detective work. But before you can get cozy with a whiskey bottle, there's a message waiting on the phone machine.

"This is a life and death emergency!! Young ladies have been disappearing left and right, and now, Donna is missing!! We need your help!!

Please come quickly!!!

Donna's rescue is only the beginning of this sizzling adventure. There's dozens more tantalizing women held against their will. Free them from the evil clutches of General Kaiser, Cobra's psychotic master criminal overlord, and they will thank you in ways that will leave you screaming in ecstasy.

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\$79.95 (suggested retail) plus \$5.00 shipping and handling

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System

requirements:

286 or faster machine
with 640K RAM;
hard disk with min.

12 megabytes of available space required, mouse recommended. Graphics compatible with EGA, MCGA and VGA (VGA highly recommended).

Sound support: Sound Blaster Pro, Adlib Gold

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R

©1992 R. This program is reflexively rated due to the partially explicit and adult content of the graphics, imagery. This program is intended for mature audiences only. It is not to be shown under 18 and where prohibited by law.

MEGATECH

ACTUAL VGA SCREEN IMAGES

BOND WAS HOT STUFF.
SO WAS ARNOLD.
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.



SOFTWARE GALLERY

Eric the Unready

Legend

MS-DOS

Designed By: Bob Bates

1 Player

Humor in games is usually subtle. It is sometimes as difficult to get people to laugh as it is to scare them in a game, so most designers keep the obvious jokes to a minimum and work more on the creation of a light-hearted atmosphere. Not Bob Bates! One of the most serene people you could ever meet, just let him open his mouth and the real Bob Bates comes out! He designed **Timequest** for Legend, as well as **Sherlock: Riddle of the Crown Jewels** and **Arthur** for Infocom.

Bates' latest adventure, **Eric the Unready**, is the most hilarious adventure game available, even surpassing the yuks provided by veteran computer game designers Steve Meretzky and Al Lowe.

Eric is a knight of questionable worth who might fit quite well in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Everything he does

The game takes place over a few days, during which each day features a new challenge for Eric from the knight's guild. These daily quests prepare Eric for the inevitable happy, albeit trick, ending. And they combine to make **Eric the Unready** one of the more challenging and well-balanced adventures available.

Bates serves a heaping helping of the expected puzzles and game play. He also adds mock games similar to *Jeopardy* and *Concentration* that are enjoyable to play and funny at the same time.

Eric the Unready uses the standard Legend interface with some added enhancements. Players can click directly on the picture window to activate objects or on the map to move around. A parser accepts commands either typed or put together with key words from menus.

A slight change makes game play even more effortless for those who want to avoid typing. All the usable verbs and important objects in a room are listed at the top of the menu so that players need not scroll down through the alphabet to find the right verb or noun. **Eric the Unready** also adds full-screen games and conversation displays to the interface, continuing Legend's intentional quest for interface diversity.

Much of the appeal of **Eric the Unready** is the over-the-top style of the humor. For example, the first quest is to catch and kiss a pig that used to be a farmer's daughter. Some of the objects that Eric needs are the Crowbar of the Apocalypse and the Bolt Cutters of Doom.

He must visit places like the Temple of the Virgins and the Mountain of the Gods, which are not by any means what they appear at first glance.

In addition to the absolutely ridiculous names in the game, Bates also threw in pop culture references galore. *Star Trek* fans are in for a few good laughs, as are fans of other TV shows, books, computer games, movies and cartoons. Many of the references are undeniably silly, but Bates has such a talent for spoofs that he should write for MAD. In fact, players will find Bates's knack for creativity in



the *Torus Inquirer*, his sendup of tabloids, which recounts Eric's daily exploits.

Eric the Unready shows off its characters and locations in gorgeous 256-color VGA graphics. The story sequences, closeups, mini-games and location pictures all blend well and demonstrate the artistic variety of the game. The game box also sports an original painting by renowned fantasy artist Boris Vallejo as a bonus visual treat.

Included are more RealSound digital sound effects than any other Legend product to date, with a whole lot of great music to highlight Eric's quests. In short, it's as far away from text games as one can get without removing the parser.

Eric the Unready will make the player's head bang against the wall in frustration at its particularly difficult puzzles while laughing out loud at the hilarious situations in the story. Bates set out to design the funniest adventure game, and he did. He made an effort to accept almost anything that the player types, responding with some joke or another, and there wasn't a reasonable command that didn't work.

Eric the Unready might make players groan and wince, but they'll have smiles on their faces.

—Russ Cecco



Eric will need all the help he can get to thwart Queen Morgana's evil plans.

goes wrong, and he continually finds new situations that test his tendency to fail. Yet Eric must set out on a quest to find the items he needs to rescue the beautiful Princess Lorealle from the evil Queen Morgana and her muscular lover, Sir Pectoral.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	85%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	
90%	

Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth of Worlds

Origin Systems, Inc.
Designed by: Paul Neurath
and Warren Spector
MS-DOS
1 Player

Ultima Underworld II will capture the imagination and hearts of role-playing adventure gamers by combining a first-person perspective interface with the rich and highly detailed world of Ultima. Using flight simulator technology to portray 360 degree freedom of movement in all directions, with the ability to jump and fly without any loss of perspective or realism, this game provides a highly personal experience closely akin to virtual reality.

The Avatar has returned to Britannia for a celebration with all of his friends and companions on the eve of the anniversary of the defeat of the evil Guardian in **Ultima VII**. During the celebration, the Guardian again strikes Britannia, encasing Lord British's castle in an anti-magic black rock gem. Searching the depths of the sewers and passageways below the castle, the Avatar discovers a smaller gem in the floor of the lowest level.



The gem proves to be a portal to eight worlds, each more strange and dangerous than the last. The events there mirror one another in a vague reflection of events within the castle itself. The Avatar moves through these worlds accumulating the ammunition to break the spell over the castle and to eventually defeat the Guardian once again.

Labyrinth of Worlds is more like the original Ultima series set in the Lord British castle. A team of professional writers penned the non-linear plot, weaving suspense and logic into the non-

player character encounters with the friends and companions of earlier Ultima. Iolo, Dupre, Jaana and others assist the Avatar with training, and interact, in true Ultima fashion, in an evolving series of conversations that change as the game moves toward a conclusion.

The first-person perspective display on the world is 30 percent larger, increasing



Many characters, both good and evil, will confront the overworked Avatar.

the awareness of the Avatar's surroundings. Otherwise, the mouse- and keyboard-activated interface remains virtually unchanged from the award-winning original game system (save that you can no longer inadvertently walk off a cliff). Combat and exploration are handled in the same display, with the only indication of combat signaled by the combat theme music that starts with the fighting.

Once one of the eight Ultima character professions is chosen for the correct mix of strength, dexterity, intelligence and luck, the

Avatar goes off to seek experience through combat and discovery. Accumulation of experience advances the Avatar in levels, which allow the Avatar to train with non-player characters to increase proficiency from 0 to 100 percent in twenty skills.

The Avatar expends mana in casting the 49 spell types of the eight spell circles. Sufficient level, mana and the appropriate spell runes, arranged on the spell casting shelf below the display, allow selection from the usual battery of defensive and offensive spells.

The excellent automapping system returns, with the ability to capture any screen to a GIF file which can be printed. Unfortunately, the designers kept the automapping system from working in two critical areas of the game, making the game play unnecessarily difficult there.

Runes are scarce and randomly assigned, so the player is without certain spells for many parts of the game. Adventuring with companions or familiars is still not possible, though planned for future dungeon delving, and there is no provision for wilderness travel.

The sound, music and fifteen startlingly-real voice pieces all contain the most excellent digital CD quality. The character graphics were more carefully drawn in larger size, then scaled down for more detail and overall clarity. True perspective texture mapping was used to eliminate any bowing and awkward distortion when close to objects. The new scaling-and-sprite engine performs



Expect many hideous confrontations when exploring Ultima Underworld II.

anti-aliasing to blend colors and motion in eight directions for the six to eight animations per action. Without a doubt, Origin has put in some overtime hours to complete this game.

Like its predecessors, **Ultima Underworld II** is the ultimate game—a state of the art adventure, with exquisite sound, music and voice. One comes to expect this kind of fantasy game, considering its maker. Gamers can hope for possible future releases of this magnificent title.

—Alfred C. Giovetti

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	91%
Sound	87%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	
92%	



SOFTWARE GALLERY

X-Wing

LucasArts Games

Designed by: Lawrence Holland & Edward Kilham

MS-DOS

1 Player

The Rebel pilot hurtled out of hyperspace headlong into six laser-spitting TIE Interceptors. Throwing his deflector shields full forward, he fired his own lasers and two TIEs exploded in a convulsion of electronic fire as a third spun wildly out of control, one of its solar panels blown to bits.

Yanking back on the stick he nailed a fourth as the remaining Interceptors roared past him. A lucky shot took out the fifth just before a hit from the TIE on his tail knocked out his laser cannons. Deftly maneuvering the TIE into his sights, he waited the eternity until his R2 unit bleeped its "system repaired" message. The TIE pilot never knew what hit him.

With a sigh of relief, the Rebel closed the S-Foils of his X-Wing fighter and prepared for the jump home.



"Red Five, target sighted!" Relive the great movie battles on your desktop!

X-Wing, the Star Wars inspired space combat simulator from LucasArts, is finally here and it was definitely worth the wait. The battle described above isn't just some dazzling intro sequence—it's an actual example of the kind of

intense action found in almost every mission within the game. Space combat has never before been this smooth and detailed on a home computer. The behavior and dynamics of the spacecraft, not to mention the music and sound effects, are reproduced exactly the way we remember them from the movies. In fact, every aspect of the game is designed to completely immerse the player in the sights and sounds of the Rebel Alliance's valiant struggle against the Galactic Empire.

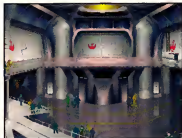
By utilizing a new engine capable of integrating fast 3-D polygons and de-tailed bitmap images, as well as their Interactive Music and Sound Effects (IMUSE) system, LucasArts achieved the state-of-the-art in smooth wall-to-wall excitement and atmosphere. **Wing Commanders I**



and **II** and **Epic** simply can't compare to the wonder of the Star Wars Universe and its comfortable familiarity. Settling down to play **X-Wing** is like dropping in for a visit with cherished old friends.

"A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away..." The moment those familiar blue letters appear on the screen players will know that they're in for a special treat. **X-Wing** chronicles events that occurred before the Star Wars films, so don't expect to see Luke, Han or Chewie (although Princess Leia and Darth Vader are on hand). In **X-Wing** the player gets to be his own hero.

After logging in and passing security, he'll find himself in the Spaceport of the Alliance Flagship *Independence*. From here he may choose the Pilot Proving Ground, an undulating obstacle course designed to test flying and targeting skills; Historical Combat, reenactments of the Rebellion's greatest missions, which



The future of the Rebel Alliance lies in the hands of these busy X-wing pilots.

also stress the unique capabilities of the X-, Y- and A-Wing fighters; and three separate Tours of Duty, culminating in the famous run on the Death Star. The Tech Room offers the opportunity to study

specs of Imperial and Alliance spacecraft, and the Film Room allows viewing of in-flight recordings from an almost infinite number of perspectives.

X-Wing is great fun for players of every skill level. Two pages of options can make it an easy arcade blast for beginners, while seasoned star warriors should expect a full workload in the cock-

pit, including energy management (shields and lasers) and the manipulation of 17 different views (although a trusty R2 unit helps out where he can).

Needless to say, the game runs best on 486-based machines, and **X-Wing** is not without its minor flaws, but only an Imperial spy would be petty enough to mention them. Like the movie, the game will satisfy fantasy x-wing pilots.

—Scott Wolf

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	96%
Sound	96%
Playability	96%
OVERALL	
98%	

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Mystery Word Grid

		T			MYSTERY I WORD
H	E	A	V	Y	
	R				
S					
				L	

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

HEAVYI LEAVE.....C METERP MAJOR.....T
ABOVER VOCALO MODAL....A CORALB
TRILLD ENTRY.....V SPOILE MUSIC.....H

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CLIP AND MAP



CD GALLERY

PC-SIG

PC-SIG
MPC IBMs and compatibles

Two words that have always had a bad smell about them in the computer world—shareware and shovelware—both turn up on what is one of the most attractively-scented CD projects this side of **The 7th Guest**.

PC-SIG (SIG being telecommunications speak for Special Interest Group—in this case, gamers), a cartel of shareware mavens who've been around since 1983, have assembled a virtual omnibus of public domain and shareware programs, from crude home-rolled versions of reversal to state-of-the-art software such as **Wolfenstein 3-D**.



PC SIG provides the user with a huge assortment of games for every taste.

Shovelware, by the way, is a term used to describe CD software that contains several previously-published games. In the early days of CD-ROM development, however, fears evolved in certain quarters that their beloved medium would become infested with product of this type. In their nightmares, they saw Bill Budge hosting half-hour TV ads for a CD collection of all the great Construction Kit products from the early '80s. In fact, there hasn't been nearly enough shovelware. The great advantage of the CD-ROM medium is its ability to store vast quantities of data, making it the ideal

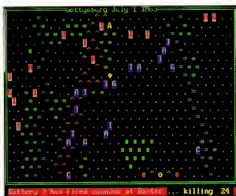
format for introducing new generations of game players to the great programs of the past.

Shareware, on the other hand, is more like underground software, produced by hobbyists, semi-pros and, sometimes, by professionals themselves. This software is then made readily available to all potential users, who can try it out and decide whether or not they want to buy it. The purchase, of course, is on the honor system, with the user expected to register the software for a reasonable price with the creator(s). Once registered, the user frequently receives supplemental material as well as upgrades to the original product. Public domain software, which is also included in this collection, is free.

PC-SIG uses a simple interface to access its over 200 available games. Programs can be chosen by category, from a list of favorites, or through a boolean search. There are 60 different Adventure and Text games, 66 Arcade titles, 51 Board and Dice contests, 35 card games, six trivia programs, and 16 General Entertainment pieces, which include word games, a version of Concentration and other miscellaneous materials. There are even eight computer Practical Jokes, including one program that generates imaginative curses and another that hurls a string of insults and abuse at the player in a literal manifestation of a user-hostile program.

Don't expect much from the majority of these programs. Most feature crude sound and graphics and many are simply wannabee versions of successful games such as **Tetris** (Spectrum-HoloByte). But where else, these days, can one find a decent Othello program? Or learn the secrets of bass fishing? Or sit and listen to a computer insult your lineage?

On the serious up side, at least one program here is worth the price of



admission on its own: Id Software's **Wolfenstein 3-D**, a virtual reality-style remake of the old Apple II classic, **Castle Wolfenstein** (Muse). With spectacular first person graphics, full Adlib and Soundblaster support and optional joystick control, this is, flat out, one of the best computer games we've ever seen. (Interested parties might also want to look into the sequel, **Spear of Destiny**, from Formgen.)

PC-SIG can be contacted at (408) 730-9291 and they'll be happy to explain the finer points of their wonderful service. In spite of the very large diversity of quality on this CD, and in some cases because of it, **PC-SIG** is a product every gamer should check out.

— Bill Kunkel

[Because of the incredible variety and range of quality among these programs, a single rating would be unfair and unrepresentative.]

RATING	
Complexity	N/A
Graphics	N/A
Sound	N/A
Playability	N/A
OVERALL	
82%	

USA Wars: Desert Storm with Coalition Command

Compton's New Media
MPC-MS-DOS

Compton's New Media is expanding its approach from pure edutainment-based products with **USA Wars: Desert Storm**. The first portion of the disk is a comprehensive database of the recent conflict, extensively illustrated with beautiful color photography.

The second half of the program, **Coalition Command (CC)**, is a fully functioning game module. Beginning with Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, the player is drawn into the situation as a temporary replacement for "Stormin' Norman," who has been injured in a helicopter accident. The term of his absence is uncertain, and the player can remain in the job as long as good strategy is developed and the ratings are kept up.

Neither the air or ground wars may be initiated without approval from higher authority. To obtain that approval, it is necessary for the player to update strategy and mission assignments as new units rotate into theater. For air units, this means assignment to general target categories, such as Chemical and Nuclear facilities, or strike escort support missions.



Armchair generals can explore many aspects of the Desert Storm War.

Acceptable strategies must balance the effort among critical areas and utilize aircraft according to their capabilities. If a player is uncertain about traditional missions for particular types of aircraft, the database is available at any point in the game to obtain that, or any other, piece of needed information. Further, General Powell may be used periodically for advice on planning. A typical message would be "Cut them up and kill them" (i.e., put more aircraft on Bridges & Transportation).

Once the air war is authorized, the player receives bomb damage assessment (BDA) reports for the preceding weekly turn, expressed as percentages for each of the target categories. Players can change the weapons mix for any given target type once per week. Players also receive losses due to interceptors, surface-to-air missiles or ground fire. Minimizing losses is critical to the final military rating.

Planning for the ground war is more esoteric. One must ensure adequate deployment along the Iraq and Kuwait

borders and maintain enough forces at sea to allow for amphibious operations. A type of assault must be specified (frontal, left flank, etc.) and the player retains no further control. Once authorized, the ground war occurs according to the preset plan and leads direct-

ly to the end game screen with the player's final ratings.

The rating system is one place where **CC** really shines. Players are rated for the impact of their decisions on Arab sentiment, media support, coalition building, embargo efforts, Israeli reaction and military intervention. Both prior to and after hostilities begin, Iraq will take one media reported action weekly. The player must scroll through a list of pre-generated press releases to select one which counter balances the negative affects of their action. Most of the releases are multi-faceted, in that they might positively affect some ratings while lowering others. Failure to balance most of these delicate interrelationships can also lead to an early removal.

Despite the serious implications weighted into each and every player decision, the designers also lent some fashion of levity to the situation by having former Vice President Dan Quayle appear periodically to offer advice such as "we must not, under any circumstance, do

anything which will offend anybody."

There were, however, some annoying glitches in the linear structure of the game. As an example, the media may report that Saddam has taken the option of initiating the ground war himself, thrusting forces in Saudi Arabia into unwary coalition. At one point this occurred prior to commencement of the air war, yet nothing actually happens (i.e., units on the map do not move and casualties do not occur) other than a shift in ratings until the player receives authorization to prosecute the ground



war, and even this doesn't occur based on Saddam's aggression. It is possible to get innocuous messages like "Saddam annexes Kuwait" late in the game.

These inconsistencies make it difficult for the player to suspend disbelief, but are not prevalent enough to destroy the game. **Coalition Command** has definite appeal for the armchair general who wants to explore the broader aspects of the war. **USA Wars: Desert Storm** fares even better, as it offers the only comprehensive reference on electronic media for a critical segment of recent history.

—Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	92%
Sound	78%
Playability	80%
OVERALL	
83%	



PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Spider-Man: Return of the Sinister Six

Flying Edge
Game Gear
1 Player

Comic book super heroes and video games were made for each other. From the earliest days of programmable video games, Atari had Superman flying around Metropolis, capturing Luthor and his henchmen and rebuilding a dynamited bridge—all on the 2K 2600! Today's slick video game systems, even the diminutive ones such as the Game Gear, make an almost perfect home-away-from-home for longjohn characters such as Superman, Batman and, ahem, Spider-Man.

Spidey's latest electronic appearance comes in the form of **Spider-Man: Return of the Sinister Six** from Acclaim's Flying Edge label. The Sinister Six are a mixed bag of Marvel misanthropes. Dr. Octopus—who had four extendible cybernetic arms grafted onto his body during the inevitable experiment-that-went-wrong—

is a definite A-level heel. Ock, it seems, has recruited five available super villains: the Vulture, a bald old man in a bird suit who has no discernible power beyond flight, yet he has given Spidey some of his toughest tussles. Nobody knows why.



Also on Doc Ock's wish list: Hobgoblin, a modern take on the old Green Goblin; Mysterio, a special effects wizard who seems to have as much going for him in super villain terms as a really good 3-card monte dealer; Electro, mastery of "current" affairs; and the Sandman, whose malleable mind and body can turn solid as rock, or crumble into tiny pieces of beach. As usual, they have nothing better to do with their time than seeking out and destroying Our Hero.

This two-meg contest offers six levels of wall-crawling, web-slinging mayhem, with each of the villains using their own unique abilities to thwart Spidey. The game is set up in standard side-scrolling fashion, with a super villain boss waiting at the end of each level. In the first scenario, for example, Spider-Man must battle his way through a cityscape in order to reach the power plant where Electro is waiting. In the city, Spider-Man battles fairly generic thug-types, who can be

either punched out or rendered hors de combat with a web-fluid power-up. The second level, in which Spidey battles the alternately elusive and all-too solid Sandman through a subterranean toxic waste dump, has an explosive conclusion as the web-slinger uses some handy TNT to wipe out a wall and escape a deadly trap. Level three is dubbed the House of Illusion, where nothing is what it seems. That makes sense, since the Boss here is Mysterio, an FX specialist gone bad. The fourth level is set among the streets and rooftops of New York City, a perfect aerie for the villainous Vulture, while Spider-Man encounters the Hobgoblin at his forest cavern in level five. The final scenario is the inevitable assault on Doc Ock's castle fortress. If Spidey can somehow get past the army of under-world soldiers guarding Ock, he's still in for the flight of his life when he goes against the Doctor, hand to hand... to hand... to hand... to... sorry. That way lies madness.

The graphics here are good, and the interface and play mechanics, despite the difficulty of producing a truly realistic command for web-shooting, are somewhat satisfying.

Spider-Man: Return of the Sinister Six is very faithful to its source material. This type of continuity between video game creators and the comic book companies bodes well for everyone, especially the fans who have been insulted by simple-minded translations of comic book good and bad guys far too long.

— Bill Kunkel



Battle six of Spidey's longtime foes in this fast-action, web-slinging adventure.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	91%
Sound	83%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	
87%	

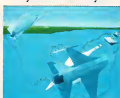
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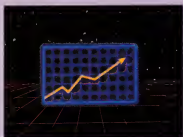
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KUNKEL REPORT

The Medium Molds the Message

by Bill Kunkel

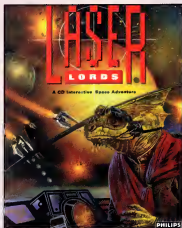
In these days when computer entertainments, from the **Ultima** series to **SimEarth**, routinely make the jump to video games, and much of Sega's Mega CD library comprises revamps of computer game staples such as **Willy Beamish** (Dynamix), the electronic entertainment industry's long maintained fences separating various game platforms seem finally ready to collapse. "A good game is a good game," goes the conventional wisdom, and a good game will work on any platform.

This all sounds quite wonderful and egalitarian, but is it true? Experience tells us that, for a variety of reasons, different media have different priorities. Computers, for example, are traditionally set up at work stations designed for a single user, while video game systems generally wind up on the living or family room floor, where many players can gather around and take turns joining in the fun. For that reason, computer games that require multiple human players have a generally dismal track record in the marketplace, as have sophisticated computer games which have been imported into the video game arena.

The fact is, even hobbyists who own both a computer and a video game system have distinctly different expectations for the software that interfaces with each of their units. Video games, after all, are designed to be plugged in and played without preamble or even extensive access to the instructions. Computer games, on the other hand, often require laborious, time consuming installation procedures before they can be booted. Once loaded, the user must often study lengthy instruction booklets while keeping the various copy protection devices—booklets, wheels, etc.—close at hand.

Now we come to the matter of expectations. By and large, video gamers pre-

fer contests with extensive use of real-time action, whereas computer entertainments often involve a more contemplative type of gaming, with an emphasis on puzzle-solving. Adventure-based RPGs are probably the single most popular genre of computer game. Computer RPGs emphasize the coordination of the questing party's various skills—the war-



Will CD-I games, such as **Laser Lords**, gain a big piece of the gaming market?

rior stands guard, for example, while the dwarf picks the lock and the wizard prepares to cast a spell in case the party is discovered. Video game RPGs, on the other hand, often integrate real-time action elements into the process, as in **Zelda II** (Nintendo/SNES) and **Fatal Labyrinth** (Sega/Genesis).

Other staples of the computer software business, such as combat simulators (flight, submarine, tank, etc.), are almost unheard of in the video game

world. Even sports games, which are extremely popular in both computer and video game formats, are often entirely different animals depending on which platform they perform upon. Computer baseball games, for example, stress statistical and situational realism. Different stadiums present different challenges, determined by their architecture (How deep is center field? Is there a short right field porch?). Hitters are at a disadvantage during night games, but have a leg up during daylight.

This level of simulation is rarely, if ever, encountered in a video game baseball contest, where the emphasis is generally placed on timing the batter's swing via the press of a controller button.

Now, as we enter the age of the "black box" system, the question is: where will these new devices fit into the current hierarchy? First off, despite their similarity to computers, the black box systems—Philips' CD-I, Pioneer's Laser Active and the vaunted 3DO among others—have a profound advantage over their computer cousins: they do not intimidate potential users. Americans are taught their entire lives that they should never, ever, ever take apart an electrical device. It voids the warranty, you'll electrocute yourself and, in all likelihood, poke out an eye in the process. Yet from the minute one brings home a PC, users are constantly disassembling it, removing and replacing boards and monkeying with the programmed configuration.

The black box transforms the computer into an appliance, with external slots for adding new technology. Black boxes also plug into TV sets, giving them the sociological advantages of a video game wedded to the power and flexibility of a computer.

It's too early to tell for sure, but the black box may be the temporary answer to our electronic gridlock, a technology that is not only accessible, but capable of producing the entire spectrum of electronic entertainment.

We'll keep our fingers crossed.

Even hobbyists who own both a computer and a video game system have distinctly different expectations for the software.

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THE JURY

This month our reader-jurors took on the video game **Super Star Wars** and the computer game **Lure of the Temptress**. All the reviews were thoughtful and made some good points, and it wasn't easy to choose just two. The winners each earn a free game from **EG**.

The next **Jury** contest is to review one of the most innovative and challenging video games of this year, **Ecco the Dolphin**. Remember, keep the length to no more than 200 words, and be sure to tell us which game you would like to win!

Lure of the Temptress

Konami
Amiga

Winning Review
by John D. Larkin

In **Lure of the Temptress** by Konami, you play Diernot who, along with his sidekick Ratpouch, must rescue the village of Turnvale from the rule of the decidedly evil Selena.



Lure of the Temptress offers the player a new RPG with distinctive characters.

On the surface, **Lure** looks like any other point-and-click adventure, and basically it is. What sets this game apart is that the other characters you run into have minds of their own. As you explore Turnvale, you will see other people carrying on conversations as if you didn't exist. This is in sharp contrast to most adventure games where the other characters wait for you to come to them.

The graphics are quite good, the sound effects are well done and the animation of the characters is superb. The game also doesn't slow to a crawl when there is more than one character on the screen, as some other games do.

About the only flaw I can find with this game is that it comes on three disks and is not hard drive installable. It also doesn't buffer anything, so if you leave a location and then immediately return, the game will reload it.

Super Star Wars

JVC
SNES

Winning Review

by Alfonso & Tony De Pasquale

Grab your light saber and rev up your landspeeder, because you are about to join forces with the Rebel Alliance. **Super Star Wars** is not just a game, it's an adventure. This cart takes you on a whirlwind ride from the desert of Tatooine to the Mos Eisley cantina to a ferocious battle within the trenches of the Death Star. You also face hordes of monsters, robots, stormtroopers and gigantic end-level bosses.

Game play is broken down into side-view run-and-jump stages and first-person stages in which the player pilots Luke Skywalker's landspeeder and X-wing fighter. The use of the Super NES's scaling abilities is absolutely astonishing.



You must utilize the Force if you hope to conquer JVC's **Super Star Wars**!

ing. Between levels, numerous cinema displays advance the plot.

The game is not perfect; control is a bit awkward, especially when jumping between platforms. Also, the cart has a nasty habit of returning the player to the beginning of the current level if he should lose a life.

However, these are minor quibbles. **Super Star Wars** is a joy to play. If you are a fan of the films, or if you love a good action title, buy **Super Star Wars**. And may the Force be with you.

Join the Jury

Review a game in **EG**'s monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games**' critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. Now, our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick a video cart each month, and challenge gamers to review it. Then, in "The Jury," **EG** will print the best ones—and give free software to the winner.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only **one** review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by **EG** editors, earns the writer the currently available video or computer game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Game for Contest #8:
Ecco the Dolphin/Sega/Genesis

Deadline for this month's contest:
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Send entries to:

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A Headstart For Kids

by Joyce Worley

We all want our kids to have an easier time learning than we did. This is precisely the reason that so many parents are eager to explore computer edutainment products.

The first lessons are the hardest, but they don't have to be difficult. The educational software industry got its start when one programmer designed an alphabet tutorial to help his own child. Since then, no one has ever forgotten that the youngest computerists are the most likely to need extra assistance.



Children use their counting skills to help Mickey buy groceries in the store.

There are a plethora of good programs that teach basic, pre-school lessons. This month we'll concentrate on a trio of titles that give young learners a headstart on primary skills.

Disney Software has the finest stable of teachers that any school has ever put together. The Disney characters, who act as on-screen playmates and guides, are already familiar to most kids. And, the beloved cartoon-folk look exactly right on screen, especially in the new 256-color VGA versions.

Mickey's ABC's: A Day At The Fair starts with Mickey snoring in bed. His home is a cozy four-roomer, bright and colorful as a Saturday cartoon, and

PLAYING IT SMART

eagerly awaiting a young child's attention. A press of any letter wakes him; then the fun begins. Once Mickey is awake, every letter of the alphabet produces a clever animation. "A" makes Mickey go to his kitchen, open the fridge and take out an apple. "B" takes him back to bed; "P" directs him to the door to let in Pluto.

The letter "F" sends him to the fair, where there's an entire new set of animations to explore, as well as other Disney friends: Minnie, Goofy, Donald and Daisy. Farm animals and fair exhibits dominate the animations, all in coloring-book bright graphics.

Mickey's 123's: The Big Surprise Party also begins with Mickey napping. Youngsters are again urged to waken him and start the day! Any number key awakens and sends him down the street to a signpost, where Mickey wonders aloud where he should go. "1" takes him to the toy factory. There, the number keys pick the toy to build. Mickey drops the box of parts into the Globulator, that converts the box into a blob. While it travels down the conveyor belt, pushing any number key causes the silly machine to process the parts in many amusing animations.

Mickey's purchases at the market are determined by the number key pressed. He travels to the post office and sends party invitations to his friends, as selected by the young player pushing number



Mickey's ABC's teach youngsters the alphabet in a fun and interactive way.

keys. Finally, when the party begins, he serves the food to his friends by choosing the number of portions of each item to give each person.

Mickey's Colors & Shapes: The Dazzling Magic Show teaches kids basic colors and geometric shapes. This one comes with a keyboard overlay to make it easy for non-readers to enter commands. In Act 1, Mickey juggles shapes selected by the child. In Act 2, he creates a scenic painting with objects shaped like the geometrics (i.e., a triangle-shaped fir tree, round flower, square shrub, rectangle,



Mickey will send letters to his friends. Use the numbers to deliver them.

gular building, oval cloud, etc.). In the third act, Mickey pulls an animal out of his hat which then runs away and hides behind geometric-shaped items. The child must locate the animal by identifying the shapes.

All three programs have charming musical accompaniment and (on computers with sound board support) speech. Mickey announces everything in his well-known mousey voice and the animals make the appropriate noises.

Once installed, minimal parental help is needed. However, each program comes with a handsome manual that suggests ways to enhance the game.

But, most important, all three are guaranteed to entertain any preschooler, while giving them a leg up on the difficult first lessons they must master.



You're so intent on testing the particle accelerator you've invented that you hardly notice the crackling of a not-so-distant electrical storm.

Before you can say SNAP, CRACKLE, POP, a lightning bolt slams through you and your accelerator with deadly accuracy.

When you finally come to, you have no idea what time or place you're in, but you know you're not safe. Face it you're warped. Unless you want to start calling this place home, you'll need to dodge, outwit and overcome a host of deadly aliens, monster guards and bloodsucking leeches who think you're a delicacy. Now, that shouldn't be too hard for a Whiz Kid like you - right?

SHRINK-WRAPPED TIME WARP

Out of This World Features

- Award-winning cinematically styled, rotoscoped animation
- State of the art real-time polygonal graphics
- Continual audio mix of digitized sound effects and musical score



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TEST LAB

East Meets East

by Ed Dille

SuperVision

Watary Industries Limited
Distributed in the U.S. by Goldnation
(U.S.A.), Inc.
\$49.95

China and Japan have been rivals since their first discovery of one another, dating back to the many wars between the geographically close, yet politically distant countries. Ideological and cultural differences aside, the conflict between these nations has traditionally been driven by economic considerations within the Asian sphere of influence. Since the end of WWII, China's isolationist policies and technological inadequacies have precluded it from competing with the Japanese directly in the electronic and computer industries. Recent moves toward capitalism within mainland China, as well as political actions which have increased China's welcome within the community of nations, are indicators of a possible shift in the current dominance enjoyed by many Japanese electronic manufacturers. China's trump card, destined to be played in 1997, is the reacquisition of Hong Kong from Great Britain. Besides the obvious political clout China will reacquire with Hong Kong, this hard-working city will also help to boost that country's economic clout in many markets, including the ever-expanding electronic gaming sphere of buyers.

Hong Kong has been a hotbed of electronic gaming activity since the early '80s, when this author first browsed the streets of Kowloon. Although not as congested as Tokyo's Akihabara district, there had already developed a tremen-

dous interest in video and computer based gaming. Unfortunately, due to inadequate trade and copyright law enforcement, Hong Kong's marketplace suffered from a malignant reputation revolving around software piracy. As such, it is not surprising that it has taken almost ten years for companies such as Watary Industries to emerge in the Western marketplace in direct competition with one of the Japanese giants, Nintendo. However, Watary has a new flagship item, and it should make the competition with the "Big N" quite exciting for the next few months. The product is SuperVision, and it is targeted squarely at capturing the existing Game Boy market.

SuperVision has a very slight technological edge over the Game Boy (see sidebar for full details), but it does offer some unique design features. The first of these is a bendable midsection, which allows the player to easily adjust the angle of the LCD screen. This feature offers two immediate advantages: the ability to eliminate glare without moving one's head at odd angles and the freedom to alter the balance point of the unit to make long play sessions less painful to the wrists. SuperVision also offers the largest display in the hand held market, eliminating the need for a follow-up attachment like the lighted magnifier utilized with Game Boy. Bravo to SuperVision for having the foresight to think of player eyesight. Another feature which will be appreciated by ergonomically concerned and point players alike is the design of the control buttons and rocker panel. Both A & B buttons are 1.5 times the size of the Game Boy and slightly more separated, minimizing the chance of hitting the wrong one inadvertently in a moment of passion. The rocker panel is

also larger and features raised knobs at the control points, ensuring more positive directional control.

The similarities between the units are actually greater than the differences. Like Game Boy, SuperVision offers a two player link for head-to-head competition as well as full stereo sound output. The latter has four tonal and one noise channel like Game Boy, but adds a separate channel for Audio DMA output. Both units use VLSI processors and 8-Bit MPU video chip controllers. SuperVision's controller is capable of 160 x 160 resolution versus 160 x 144 for the Game Boy, but the visual difference is negligible.

Given the large degree of equivalency in terms of technology, one might reasonably ask why they should purchase SuperVision either in addition to or in lieu of Game Boy, which has an available library of 215 cartridges at the time of this writing. Watary has two strategies to address inherent consumer skepticism. The first of these involves unit pricing. SuperVision is currently being test marketed at \$49.95 with one included game, **Crystball** (more on that later). Interestingly, Nintendo of America recently announced a new packaging option called the Game Boy Basic. Priced at \$59.95, the package includes the base unit and batteries only. When questioned as to the timing of the announcement, Nintendo representatives denied that their marketing plan was influenced by the introduction of SuperVision to the U.S. market. Individual SuperVision games will be priced from \$8.95 to \$14.95. This pricing directly targets consumers who are irritated at spending \$30 and up for individual games, many of which are mastered by their adept offspring in a week or less.

SuperVision does enjoy a slight technological edge over the still-popular Game Boy.

The second hook for consumer interest is something unseen in portables up to this point: a full color capable television link slated to appear in the second half of this year. As yet unpriced, the unit was previewed at the Winter CES in Las Vegas with a mixed response (it was in the very early stages of development). While a relatively unique idea, the thought of tying a portable unit to a television set eliminates the inherent advantages of portability to begin with. Seeing favorite grey scale games in glorious color may have a short-lived appeal but programs will still be limited to the capabilities of hand-held hardware.

Given that the vast majority of portable owners also have one or more dedicated video game consoles, each of which is more capable than all the portables combined, it is doubtful that the peripheral will pique the level of interest that Watary is hoping to attain.

Another consideration critical to the acceptance and survival of any new piece of hardware is the level of software support it receives from the manufacturer and third party developers. As to the latter, negotiations are in progress but none of the major developers have gone on record in support of the new platform.

Watary claims that it will market an existing library of 40 titles, currently supporting European users of their product, to coincide with SuperVision's widespread introduction to the U.S. market. Further, they have announced 40 addi-

tional products during 1993, including **Rambo**, **Terminator** and **Elite** licensed titles.

Test Lab was provided with 7 games for immediate evaluation, all of which evoke a sense of

more competitive. **Police Bust** is a **Pac-Man** type maze game, in which the player character must avoid the cops as he "eats" his way through the various levels. **Happy Race** is an overhead perspective maze driving game similar to more than one early Atari 2600 title. **Olympic Trials** is similar enough to Konami's

Track & Field to be scary. **Hero Kid** is a straight up side-scroller in the Mario tradition that suffers from a poorly designed control interface. **P-52 Sea Battle** is a torpedo-type game, slightly reminiscent of the ancient mechanical arcade game where the player's shots consisted of colored chaser lights that would flash when a ship was hit, treating the player to the spectacle of a plastic ship sinking below a cardboard ocean.

The best of the lot was undoubtedly **Eagle Plane**, a first-person perspective arcade flight simulator. Players have a radar screen that tracks bogeys and they must maneuver horizontally to bring them into the field of fire. Weapons systems, armor and fuel capacity can be upgraded between successful missions and the game stays fresh much longer than its counterparts.

Weighing all of the factors presented thus far, the overriding consideration seems to be that it is still possible to be disappointed in a game that costs under fifteen dollars. Value-priced Atari 2600 cartridges, such as the disastrous **ET** title in the days of yore, proved the undoing of that venerable pioneer platform in the world of video gaming.

The only acceptable approach at this stage is to see if Watary can generate sufficient third party interest to market some innovative new titles. If this is not an option for the company, then some extensive overhaul in the existing game programming should take place if this new kid on the block wants to seriously contest Nintendo's bully-ish presence in the portable gaming world.

In the interim, SuperVision is going to have a very difficult time cracking the case-hardened nut that Game Boy has become. And, as everyone knows, this did not happen overnight.



déjà

vu.

Crystball, the game included in the initial package, is a sub-standard **Break-out** clone that lacks both the playability of the original and the advanced features of later iterations like **Arkanoid**.

Without some of the newer features found in these games, the pack-in cart may suffer from consumer's instant dislike. As we know, first impressions are hard to forget. However, there are other games that may just make the system

Features

Features	Game Boy	SuperVision
Screen Size:	1.86" x 1.70"	2.76" x 2.76"
Pixel Resolution:	20720 dots	25600 dots
Grey Scales:	4	4
External RAM size:	64k	64k
External ROM size:	512k	256k-1024k
External Video RAM:	64k	64k
AC/DC converter	Yes	Yes



LORE

Mastering Genesis Sports Games

Carol Ann Hanshaw & Neil Hanshaw,
Compute Books, 160 pages
(softbound, \$9.95)

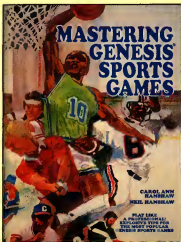
Sports simulations have provided a favorite pastime since mechanical steeplechase games were offered at the county fair, or coin-op arcades offered table-top hockey, but they have come into their own with the advent of the video game. This collection of tips on Genesis titles covers 19 carts, with chapters running the gamut from baseball to volleyball: **Joe Montana Football**, **NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana**, **John Madden Football '92**, **RBI Baseball 4**, **Sports Talk Baseball**, **Bulls vs. Lakers** and **the NBA Play-offs**, **Jordan vs. Bird**, **James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing**, **Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing**, **Mario Lemieux Hockey**, **Andre Agassi Tennis**, **PGA Tour Golf**, **World Championship Soccer**, **Super Volleyball**, **Super Monaco GP** (Formula 1 racing), **Road Rash** (motorcycle racing), **California Games** (sun sports), and two "future sports" titles, **Road Blasters** and **Powerball**.

Each chapter starts with a short, evocative description of the action in the title game. This is followed by a paragraph titled **Ground Rules**, covering not the rules of the sport but what the player can expect of the simulation itself. The next paragraph, called "Who Are You?," advises the role or roles the player may assume.

In most chapters, **Player Positions** comes next, advising the viewpoints from which the action can be seen or joined. A section called "Button Controls" runs down the required controls. "Playing the Game" and "Winning" provide suggestions and recommendations for the best approaches to successful play versus computer or human opponents. There are other tip sections that vary depending on the game; in addition, there are

frequent training tips throughout each chapter.

Unlike action shooters and other varieties of video games, sports simulations seldom rely on repetitive or memorized action sequences to get through. One does not "beat" a sports game any more than the athletes who play in the real



If you're a Genesis sports fan, then this publication is sure to improve your game!

thing do. But computers being what they are, there are occasional tricks and cheats by which the player can gain an advantage. The Hanshaws provide some of these, too, and leave it up to the gamer to decide if it's sportsmanlike to use them.

—Ross Chamberlain

Falcon 3: The Official Combat Strategy Book

Howard Bornstein, Prima Publishing,
362 pages
(softbound, with Utility disk, \$27.95)

Howard Bornstein followed the development of Spectrum Holobyte's **Falcon**

as a play tester from its beginning, and his intimacy with the subject is evident on every page. The book is organized in three parts; each offers a more thorough treatment than the two competing titles from other publishing houses.

The first section sets the tone of the work, provides users with some shortcuts in navigating the menu system, and is highlighted by a chapter devoted to artificial intelligence. Inner workings of the autopilot and weapons engagement systems are discussed, explaining why some aircraft are engaged automatically and how radar, weapons and counter-measure use decision trees.

The second section, "Getting Serious," does just that. Rather than explaining how to manipulate the features of the aircraft, adequately covered by the manual, each is discussed with regard to tactical employment. As an example, the player is taught which HUD to pull up in a given situation, what instruments are most critical to monitor during that evolution, and which may be ignored to prevent distraction. Chaff, ECM, Navigation, Fuel management, Electronic and Visual Identification are also given similar treatment in what is truly a primer for battlefield survival. The final chapter reveals a lot of secret tricks and hidden features of the game which are only available in certain situations or scenarios—like finding Godzilla in pursuit of the Love Boat near the Kurile Island chain during Operation Fighting Tiger.

The final section discusses Red Flag and Campaign missions by type. The author has done a service to all players by investing a lot of time designing the missions provided on disk with the book.

Other goodies on the disk include the latest **Falcon** patch, a utility that lets players edit pilot and campaign files, a map file that allows use of any theater of operations for any mission, a screen saver and viewer utility for user generated slide shows. The disk alone is worth the price of the package.

—Ed Dille



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1. What company created the original coin-op versions of Centipede, Asteroids, and Missile Command?
a. Accolade b. Atari c. Nintendo
2. What year did Centipede first appear in the arcades?
a. 1982 b. 1986 c. 1976
3. The arcade versions of Missile Command and Centipede had a major similarity:
a. Both were games featuring bugs
b. Both used eight way control pads
c. Both used multi-directional track balls

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Centipede Arcade Game

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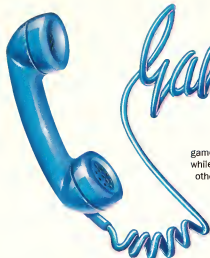
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and Missile Command

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Gaming On-Line

Accessible Delphi

by Ed Dille

Delphi

300/1200/2400 baud

\$10 for 4 hours or

\$20 for 20 hours per month

Delphi has never been known for its on-line gaming area, consisting primarily of text-based interactivity against computer opponents. Fortunately for fans of modem-based products, this situation is about to change. The programmers and management of Delphi are adopting a slightly different approach than services like The Sierra Network, which highlights its own products and requires consumers to purchase special software to access the service.



Delphi is offering a variety of famous card games for modem-gaming fans.

Delphi may be accessed via any Sprint-net, Timenet or Internet local access number. The latter is particularly significant because it is currently the only on-line service that supports this direct avenue to over ten million users using

game servers all over the world. Further, while providing unprecedented access to other players, Delphi is committed to maintaining its low usage fees and has no current plans to invest developmental dollars in original multi-player products accessible only through its forum. Rather, Delphi seeks to capitalize on the growing base of commercial games that support modem play by acting as the first international meeting place and clearing house for head-to-head gamers.

After logging onto Delphi, players should enter the conference room in the entertainment menu. Here, it is possible to see who is on-line at that time, as well as when a particular user was last connected. It is possible to chat with other players directly and issue a challenge for a particular game, or simply post a message stating which game a player enjoys most and the times that he or she would be available to play. Other print magazines in this industry have offered similar services in non-real time, but players were forced to look for local phone numbers to avoid exorbitant long distance bills. By connecting through Delphi, players can enjoy access rates as low as one dollar an hour regardless of location. That is an unprecedented value.

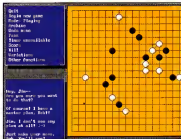
The first titles to appear on Delphi will be **Chessnet**, **Telego** and **Telecards**.

Chessnet, by Masque Publications, is a windows-based chess product that supports chat mode and full graphics.

Telego is a shareware product based on the ancient game of Go. It is fully compatible with two commercial iterations of that board game, **Nemesis** and **The Many Faces of Go**. **Telecards** is another popular shareware game that includes Cribbage, Gin Rummy and Crazy Eights. On-line tournaments are also planned, in the tradition of Delphi's existing and highly popular Thursday night Poker tournament.

More significantly, as alluded earlier, Delphi intends to support every commercial modem title possible. Currently, Microprose's **Command HQ** and **Global Conquest** are being tested for implemen-

tation, as well as QQP's **Perfect General**. Each of these titles have developed fanatical followings in their own right, and their inclusion bodes well for the long term viability of Delphi's initiative. Some experimentation with flight simulators is in progress (such as **Knights of the Sky**), but the logic that drives these products is more difficult to translate than board-type games (witness the diffi-



The ancient, yet intriguing game of Go is now available on the Delphi network.

culty TSN is having with their on-line version of **Red Baron**). This is not to say that the problem is unfathomable, rather that one should not expect a **Falcon** dog-fight on Delphi in the immediate future.

What is more important than the initial game selections, however, is the tremendous potential of Delphi's vision. Imagine the possibility of a national, or even global, gaming competition, involving titles from many publishers. Popular games and simulations could be played by numerous gamers. Computer enthusiasts have never had the opportunity to participate in something similar to the Nintendo Nationals (where the games to be utilized are not announced until the last minute), and there is definitely an interest among multi-faceted players in finding out who is the best of the best. Electronic gamers relish the thought of vanquishing one of their own above any computer AI opponent, and Electronic Fandom can do nothing but benefit from a service that truly addresses their needs for connectivity.

See you on-line!

Coming Attractions...

In the June Edition of Electronic Games

The Players' Guide to Baseball

Nobody knows interactive baseball like Electronic Games and this multi-part feature covers the subject from all-out action games to statistically based simulations. Get strategy hints from major league manager Tony LaRussa, and find out how to build a baseball dynasty in your favorite video or computer game!

Jordan Mechner Speaks!

The EG interview features one of the world's most popular, yet reclusive designers, Jordan Mechner. In his exclusive interview, Jordan tells fans of *Karateka* and *Prince of Persia* about his plans for *Prince of Persia* and the *Prince of Persia* video game.

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- Playing It Smart
- Gaming On-Line
- Lore

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Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands May 11, 1993!

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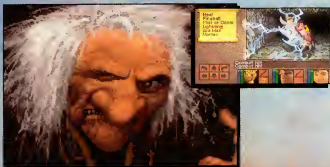
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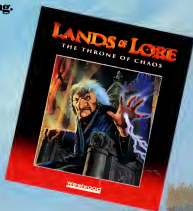
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